



The Author

OUR NEXT-SHORE NEIGHBOURS

By
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NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

First Edition, January, 1954; 2,000 Copies

Rupees Two, Annas Eight

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Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai
Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad-9

A FOND HOPE

A travelogue should hardly need a foreword or introduction. At the instance of some kind friends I went to East Africa and spent about two months and a half in that delightful region. We visited Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. We were subsequently tempted to visit Ruanda-Urundi which is a territory mandated to Belgian Congo. The book purports mainly to record the impressions of this tour. It records also my views on the situation in Africa and on the mission which I visualize to be also the destiny of that continent of Dawn.

I refuse to recognize Africa as the Dark Continent. No doubt the complexion of the people living there is dark and some of the doings of the European settlers there have at times proved to be darker still. But man profits by his experience of the past, tries to improve himself in the present and, in spite of the worst experience and failures of both the past and the present, loves to hope for a bright future.

The Europeans went to Africa with, perhaps, absolutely sordid motives; but they could not leave their religion and culture behind them. The story of the European occupation of Africa therefore, is a strange mixture of adventure, exploitation, and ruthlessness, coupled with a desire to serve and civilize the various primitive and lovable races of Africa. The Europeans there are still making bold but blind

experiments for reproducing European civilization for themselves in Africa and they are trying to 'train' the life of the Africans to suit this ambition. But, the experiments do not prove to be in consonance with the signs of the times. They may try, if they like, to squeeze out the Asians out of Africa but they will not be able to rule over the races of Africa exactly as they would wish to do.

The Lord of Human Destiny gave the Europeans a full chance of more than a century, of serving the whole world. They did serve the world to some extent, through science, trade, mighty organizations and religious propaganda, but the results are not reassuring enough. There is a poignant folk-tale current in Africa wherein it is said that the European was not so very white in the beginning. He had a coloured complexion as befits decent human beings. God gave him the charge of the African races and said, "These are my youngest children. Be thou the elder brother to them and treat them with loving kindness."

God waited long enough and then, one day, asked the white man, "Have you been true to the trust I reposed in you?" The European could not look God straight in the face and he turned pale!! That is why the Europeans are so very white today.

The achievements of Asians in Africa are not so dark, but neither can they boast of any brilliant achievements so far. But the time has come when the Europeans and the Asians have alike, to change their outlook and serve the Africans with real loving kindness as towards a blood brother.

The policies that are being pursued in East and South Africa do not encourage the belief that there is

going to be in the near future a loving and honourable co-operation between the Europeans, the Asians and the Africans on the soil of that equatorial continent and yet, somehow, I cling to the belief that some day the clouds of selfishness, callousness, bitterness, frustration and despair, will all pass away and the three races will learn to know and love each other better, and they will in good time evolve a common multi-racial human brotherhood. In that fond hope I have ventured to send forth this book, although there is so much darkness all round.

Mansing Road,
New Delhi

Kaka Kalelkar

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OUR NEXT-SHORE NEIGHBOURS

I

IMPORTANCE OF AFRICA

Most of the equator lies on the watery surface of our globe. The great continents of Asia, Europe and North America lie exclusively in the Northern Hemisphere. Australia and a large part of South America lie in the Southern. The continent of Africa is on the equator and spreads evenly on both sides. The equator also passes through South America. (Sumatra, Borneo and other islands are on the equator no doubt, but they are too small to be taken into account). Near the equatorial part of Africa are the territories of British East Africa and Belgian Congo. This area is of great importance to us because of its suitable climate, and the potentialities of the growth of human civilization there. India's past, present and future are also somehow wedded to it.

The whole of East Africa is ruled by the British in one way or another. After having had to relinquish their hold on India the British want to strengthen their grip on East Africa. That is why they have begun to take greater interest in the problems of the African people and of the Indians settled there. Our people have built up quite a good position for themselves in East Africa. As for the Africans, they are awakening from their slumber of ages and have begun to demand greater rights and facilities for education.

The sharp conflict between the whites and the coloured people in South Africa has also begun to

have its effect on East Africa, and with the growing interdependence of countries of the world the United Nations organization too is now taking more and more interest in Africa's various problems.

New Experiment

After India's independence the British people invited our country to join the Commonwealth and we accepted the invitation. This is a development of great significance in world politics. What was once a family corporation of the British race has become an experiment in a colossal multi-racial co-operation. Both India and East Africa are members of the Commonwealth.

In these circumstances the inevitable multi-racial co-operation in East Africa of the great peoples of Africa, Europe and Asia is of great importance for the future of mankind. In this book I propose to give only a few glimpses of my travels during the eight or ten weeks I spent in East Africa. This is just a beginning with India's wider interest in view. Hundreds of books on Africa ought to be written in our Indian languages from the point of view of India's wider interest. They should be based on a solid study, a broad human outlook, a real understanding of both politics and economics, and a living human interest in anthropology, besides comprehensive knowledge of geology which explains the peculiarity of the structure of the African continent.

Ancient Links

Our connection with Africa is older, deeper and of greater significance than we know or imagine. India took its present geographical shape some millions of

years ago. Before that the Arabian Sea did not exist. The present Gujarat, Rajasthan, the valleys of the Ganga and the Yamuna, Bihar and the whole of Bengal were under water. What are today the Laccadive and Maldivé Islands must have been peaks of high mountains in a mass of land. South India of today was probably connected through this area with Madagascar on the coast of Africa. Similar fossils of ancient animals are found both in Africa and South India. Many of the tribes of Africa, according to some experts, might have migrated there from South India. After the creation of what are India and Africa of today our countrymen of the Vedic Age and the period of the Puranas went, according to references in our ancient books, to the source of the river Nile through Egypt and also to the Chandragiri mountains (now known as the Mountains of the Moon). The very ancient Egyptian civilization, the Greek civilization, the civilization in the valley of the river Indus and the Chaldean civilization with its many branches were all connected and known to one another. Although there are no written chronicles of that period, old relics are making it possible for the story of those times to be traced and put together, and the history of this early period has begun to have its effects on human behaviour and our outlook on life.

So far, this knowledge has been only a subject of curiosity, but hereafter it can be utilized in the great effort that will be made to weld the races of mankind into one family, thus saving them from fratricidal annihilation. It has, therefore, become necessary to bring even this antiquarian knowledge to the common people of all countries. Historians of the world and those interested in the good of mankind are already

struggling towards the development of this outlook. If our people lag behind, we shall have to pay heavily for it.

Travel Books

I cannot deal with all these aspects in this short travelogue. I propose to set down here in brief what I saw, experienced and thought during the two months of travel. I shall be satisfied if the reader finds interest in it and is induced to make a deeper study of the subject. I shall be fully content if only our people are encouraged to write travel books, and such literature grows in our language. Our countrymen are not stay-at-homes and they have had so far enough opportunities to see, examine and study, and such opportunities will hereafter continue to increase. The benefit derived from them should reach the masses. Our people have not been in the habit of writing accounts of their travels. Once this urge is born and people start taking an interest in writing about their experiences, a varied, rich and valuable literature will begin to grow. It does not matter in what language of India such literature appears. If a solid, worthwhile book is published in one language, it can easily be translated into others. The main question is of a wider and genuine interest. When that is created people cannot help being enlightened. And awakened people, realizing their mission, are sure to try to fulfil it. I delight in dreaming such dreams about India.

Many people have asked me about the purpose of my trip to Africa. I have had to answer this question even before I set out on the journey as well as during and after it.

To be truthful, I always said that my first aim, even if it was not the main one, was sight-seeing.

There is a joy in seeing fresh lands and pastures new. I set out to see a new country with the same devotion with which our pious people used to go on pilgrimages. So long as I considered India alone as the sacred land, I was never given an opportunity of going abroad. It was after my outlook had become a little broader and I had begun to think of the whole of mankind and learnt to respect the teachings of Lord Buddha that I found an opportunity to visit Burma. When I went to Ceylon with Gandhiji I did not feel that I was in a foreign land because of my affection for Buddhism.

Attitude of Devotion

Just as, after understanding the true meaning of Hinduism I developed respect for all the religions of the world and started considering them all equally true, good and in every way my own, so do I consider all countries of the world equally sacred. It was the same devotional attitude which inspired me to travel from Rameshwaram in the south to the Himalayas in the north that created in me the desire to see Africa. All the rivers of the world are as sacred as the Ganga. Every lake is as pure as Mansarovar. Every mountain is a spirit of the gods like the Himalayas. The source of every stream is good and beneficent as the blessing of God. It was with this firm conviction that I set out on my trip to Africa.

My interest in seismography was aroused when I first heard of earth-quakes in Japan. Then I wished to learn more about Japan and the eruption of volcanoes there. I saw various instruments connected with this science in the Alibagh Laboratory near Bombay. This made me curious to find out how the continent of Africa had been created.

Notorious for its slave traffic but fragrant with the flavour of cloves which it produces, Zanzibar has been a field of enterprise for the Hindus and Muslims of Kutch and Kathiawad. This knowledge also led me to plan a trip to Zanzibar.

Source of the Nile

I was also attracted by the fresh water and salt lakes of East Africa. I was as eager to see the spring source of the north-ward flowing river Nile as I had been to see the origin of our Ganga and that is why on the analogy of Gangotri I gave the name of Nilotri to the source of the Nile.

Having heard accounts about his own and other Indians' enterprise in Africa from Rajratna Nanji Kalidas I was curious to see what that land was like and what part our countrymen had played in its development.

From newspaper accounts and in talk with travellers I had found how the natives of Africa are longing to regain their lost freedom, how the whites rule over them, and how colour differences lead to exploitation and divisions. I, therefore, felt that I should visit this great field of human activity.

Ten years earlier I had met Shri Shivabhai Amin on his visit home from East Africa. He had then spoken strongly about Indians' duty towards Africans, sent me a book called *Facing Mount Kenya* and recommended a visit to East Africa. Even though I did not accept his suggestion, it left an impression on my mind. Because of all these considerations I had a desire to visit East Africa, taking advantage of my visit to South Africa. Shri Appasahib Pant and Shri Nanji Kalidas mentioned a scheme for a Gandhi Memorial College in Africa which would be open alike

to the black people of Africa, and the whites of Europe along with the brown people of Asia; and told me that my help would be required to give the idea a concrete shape and to explain the purpose of the scheme to the people. Not that I would have the responsibility of collecting funds for the scheme. But I could offer advice after studying the plans from the points of view of public interest and educational development. I could also help in gaining people's support for the scheme. I knew that this purpose could be achieved more effectively through private discussion than by addressing public gatherings. I decided on this plan and made up my mind to visit various educational institutions of East Africa. I had already read the report of two experts sent there by the Government of India to advise on the memorial scheme.

I also wanted to see how far our religious preachers, who off and on go to East Africa, had succeeded in raising the moral and social standards of our people there through their preachings, particularly because I had heard some rather disconcerting reports about the life there.

Rich Experience

Thus my decision to visit Africa was based on many considerations. After these three months I can say that during this period I saw a good deal and learned a good deal more. I was able to judge the situation in Africa from Gandhiji's point of view, and I feel that this point of view has made me better able to understand the present world situation. I was able to gain richer experience and greater knowledge than is ordinarily possible in a trip of two or three months.

because few could have been given greater co-operation by as large a number of people as I received. As a reward of whatever little service I have done to the Gujarati language, I was welcomed with affection in many homes of Hindu and Muslim Gujaratis in East Africa, and I was able to make a special study of the cultural potentiality of the Gujarati language

II

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

The opportunity to visit East Africa came to me in a curious way. The Gandhi Memorial Fund trustees entrusted to me the responsibility of establishing a Gandhi Memorial Museum in New Delhi. The work of collecting exhibits connected with Gandhiji and his life story, therefore, became part of my job. To collect this material chronologically it was natural that South Africa should be visited after a tour of Saurashtra. I felt it would be convenient to go to South Africa *via* East Africa. I planned the whole trip in consultation with Shri Manilal Gandhi, who happened to come to India to attend the World Pacifists' Conference. On his way back he spoke about it to my old friend Shri Appasahib Pant, India's Commissioner at Nairobi, in East Africa. Shri Pant heartily welcomed the idea. He not only liked the thing but began to persuade me to visit East Africa immediately, even if I had to delay the trip to South Africa.

Trip Postponed

Shri Appasahib Pant happened to mention my plan to Shri Nanji Kalidas, a Gujarati multi-millionaire who by sheer untiring industry and daring

has built up an enormous business in East Africa and has made innumerable and substantial gifts for public causes there. Arriving in India Nanjibhai invited me to visit East Africa and asked me not to worry about the financial side of the trip.

Owing to other preoccupations I went on postponing the trip. But when I went to Porbandar, Gandhiji's birthplace, to see the Kirti Mandir built there by Nanjibhai he made Miss Sarojini Nanavati, my secretary, and me sign permit papers for our voyage to East Africa.

December 1949 was spent in attending the World Pacifists' Conference held at Santiniketan and Seagram. January had to be spent in a trip to Bihar. On January 26, our Republic Day, I preferred to attend a huge gathering of about 50,000 aborigines in Madhya Pradesh rather than join in the celebrations in New Delhi. The next month, February, was spent in moving about among the Abor, Mishmi and other forest tribesmen around Sadiya on the eastern frontier of India. I had been able to go to Porbandar only after making these journeys. And although I had decided to visit East Africa, how could I miss the All-India Sarvodaya Conference to be held in Orissa during National Week in April? So I could start only in May, 1950.

An Ordeal

One has these days to take injections against certain diseases to reassure the people of the country one is visiting. Similarly when returning one has to take injections so that one does not bring with oneself any of the diseases of the country visited. This is to

protect the people of one's own country against diseases of foreign countries. So we had to go through the ordeal of having injections against cholera, small-pox and yellow fever. As to our passports, etc., there was no difficulty in obtaining them since we have our own Government now.

As we could not decide in time exactly when we would leave we had to be content with second class accommodation on the *Kampala*. The accommodation was not bad, and we were able to save a little. On May 8, 1950, we left India. Although we boarded the steamer on May 8, we should say we left India on May 9 when we left the port of Marmagao.

This was not altogether my very first sea voyage. Nor could I say that I had never left my country before. I had travelled by sea from Calcutta to Rangoon and back, a journey of three days each way. I had also travelled by sea from Bombay to Karachi and back. Once I travelled from Bombay to Colombo by sea with Gandhiji. But I had never felt that I was leaving India and going far away. From childhood I had had the feeling that both Burma and Ceylon are lovely parts of our own country. That is why, in spite of differences in ways of life, I had never thought then that I had been to or was in a foreign land.

This time, the impression that I was going to a foreign country was forced upon me because of our having to get passports and permits from the East Africa Government.

As officers of Messrs Mehta Bros. were looking after our convenience and comfort we had only to board the steamer. The question of dress was a bit of a puzzle. Shri Nanji Kalidas said that our usual dress

would do even in East Africa. My son, Bal, said persuasively that *dhoti*, etc., could never do abroad. One must wear trousers. My elder son, Satish, supported him. Shri Devadas Gandhi agreed that our *dhoti* was unsuitable abroad, as it is considered uncivilized there to display one's calves. But if I wore a *lungi* in the Madras style instead of a *dhoti*, I could keep my own individual style of dress and at the same time conform to the ways of people abroad. Seeing my difficulty, Dadasaheb Mavlankar, Speaker of Parliament, finally gave his ruling that *dhoti* should be worn where only Indians gathered or at private functions. But when meeting foreigners or attending some important function or party, the almost universally accepted national dress should be the choice, the dress being tight pyjamas, *achkan* with a close collar and the Gandhi cap.

I accepted Shri Mavlankar's suggestion wholeheartedly. The controversy being thus settled, I soon became an adept in the art of pulling on tight pyjamas.

As to food, I decided to maintain my lifelong practice of not eating meat, chicken, fish, eggs, etc. Drinking was, of course, out of the question. I gave up all other niceties and taboos which I had cultivated. It was enough if one could keep away from meat and liquor.

III

ON THE BOSOM OF THE OCEAN

The western coast of India was clearly within sight all the way from Bombay to Marmagoa. So long as the mother is in sight the child believes that it is with her. Similarly we did not feel we had left our motherland so long as this coast was in sight. On leaving Marmagoa our steamer *Kampala*, going at right angles to the coast, made straight for the vast ocean

The familiar coast was soon lost to sight and there was nothing but water all round us. With night-fall the sky began to be populated by its twinkling denizens, so one did not feel quite so starkly lonely. The winds and clouds began to be more playful as we advanced towards the equator. Because of good weather the sea was calm. Now and then it would ripple with laughter. Some waves, like an abortive sneeze, subsided before they could burst into foam. Sometimes the sea looked inky blue. At others it would be jet black. As the ship cut its way through the waters the splashing foam on both sides looked like designs on marble-paper. The design had one kind of grace on the blue water and a different effect when the waters were all black. The surface of the sea was sometimes wrinkled. But once in a while the wrinkles would disappear and the sea would look like shining Mackintosh. The stately ship rolled majestically as it moved forward and cradled us into rest. But even a heavy ship begins to pitch like a rider when it strikes against oncoming waves. One does not feel comfortable

if pitching continues for any length of time. But how can one stop it? On land, if one is tired of swinging one can get off. But once you boarded the ship for Mombasa you had to accept its rolling and pitching for full eight days without a break. One feared that a combination of rolling and pitching might make one's head reel. There was also the feeling that one would actually be sick, if one only began to think of being sick. On the sea one develops a good appetite. But even when relishing one's food, one has a sneaking fear of not being able to retain it. It was not easy to get rid of this fear. We, however, were quite happy throughout the eight days. People had warned us that the last four days would be rather trying. But fortunately we did not have any difficulty. The day we crossed the equator, there was a strong wind for a time, but in no way did it depress us.

For a period one enjoys being surrounded by the vast expanse of water. Then the whole aspect becomes grave. Finally the air of gravity deepens into uneasiness at the thought that one's whole world has dwindled into a single ship. And it appears so small and insignificant in comparison with the vast ocean — a mere speck at the mercy of the sea. Barring this tiny world of a ship there is only water, water everywhere. What is the purpose of this infinite expanse of water? However vast the expanse of land, one never wonders why so much land has been created. Looking at the vast, all-pervading and endless sky too, one does not want to know the reason for its creation. But looking at the sea one cannot help wondering. Eyes accustomed to land begin to be bewildered when presented with an unbroken expanse of water, and tiring of it one seeks relief in watching the piling

clouds on the horizon. Often times these clouds fringing the horizon are formless, shapeless and without meaning. When the whole sky is dull and overcast the unrelieved murky expanse becomes almost unbearable. Providence, however, brings even such bewilderment to an end, the eyes close, and turning inwards one is lost in deep thought.

At night time and specially in the early hours of the morning we enjoyed looking at the stars. But envious clouds would cover now one part of the sky and then another as if they were children bent upon not letting us see the whole sky. We had, therefore, to content ourselves with seeing whatever part of the sky we could.

On Saturday we sighted a returning ship heading towards us. It flashed a light to greet our ship. Our ship must have returned the courtesy. If the ships had come nearer to each other they would have whistled. But when ships are far apart, they can only exchange flashes of greeting. After four days of isolation, it was a joy to see another miniature world like our own, floating on the sea of life. Passengers on our ship were dreaming of Africa. Those in the other ship must have been dreaming of India, their motherland. It would be interesting if one could peep into the minds of all the passengers of all the ships and compare what passes in their breasts.

There are generally three classes on a ship. In the first are those doomed to respectable untouchability. Nobody minds the provision of greater amenities for them. But they seem to feel that their dignity lies in the fact that no one is allowed to enter their domain. A major part of the upper deck is reserved for their rest and recreation. Second class

passengers also have facilities but not so commodious. It is the third class passengers who are treated as less than human beings. They are herded together anyhow and anywhere. It is an ordeal for men to live like cattle for eight whole days at a stretch.

Lately an intermediate class between the third and the second has been improvised. This might be called the monkey species, being somewhere between that of humans and beasts. This class is also crowded no doubt, but passengers can at least stretch themselves to sleep like human beings.

When some Gujaratis came to know that we were on board, they began to visit us. When the sailors came to know that we met for our prayer every morning and evening, they invited us to have our evening prayers with them on the lower deck. Almost all the sailors on the ship were from Surat district. Deeply devoted to religious songs, they knew a large number of them by heart and could sing them well. When once they started these devotional songs, they would forget the worries of the day's hard work. One could not believe that they were the same people who silently worked all day, going about like automata in their blue uniforms. Sometimes I gave them a religious discourse at these gatherings. I told them that separatist walls could be built only on land, not on sea. They who were loyal to the sea must not, therefore, have any caste or communal distinctions. Those who take to the sea should be large-hearted like the sea and feel themselves as the citizens of all the lands they touch.

While we were spending our time in prayers and devotional songs, the Goan passengers on the ship

arranged a dance. Since we were asked to subscribe towards its expenses, we earned the right to be among the spectators.

One hardly meets with any Eurasian among the Christians of Goa. It is always interesting to see the influence of Westernization on those who are pure Indians in blood and have accepted Christianity as their religion. We saw a number of couples on the floor. Some couples were grave and formal and were dancing mechanically as if they were going through a social ritual. Others were engrossed in the dance and in each other. There was such disparity in age and height in one or two couples that one wondered why they undertook to go through the embarrassing ordeal. The dancing of so many people crowded in a small place was itself an achievement. We had no desire to hold out to the end. We went to bed long before 11 p.m.

Since we were going westward, *i.e.*, in the opposite direction of the earth's movement, we had to correct our watches every day. There would be an announcement every night asking us to put back our watches at midnight by half-an-hour or an hour. Knowing the facts of physical geography, we did not mind this loss of time! In all, we had to lose two and a half hours by the time we reached Africa.

Later, we lost another hour on entering Belgian Congo, but of that in its proper place

For those unfamiliar with the subject it may be explained that one has either to advance or put back the clock by an hour after every 15 degrees longitude. When ships cross the date-line, *i.e.*, 180° longitude they lose or gain a whole day, according as they go east or west.

For eight days one did not see a newspaper or receive any mail. There were no visitors and one did not see the usual city or village people. So much so that even hills or islands were things to be imagined. When hours and days just flit by one cannot keep track of dates or decide what day of the week it is. Considering the height of the ship I tried to judge the extent of the sea visible right up to the horizon and was told by the ship's staff that one could see 250 square miles of the ocean. What a peace! Rolling, swinging, flowing, and yet stationary. Peace reigned under the protection of the sky. Swelling and rolling peace — abiding and abounding.

With this feeling of peace my heart welled up with love for the whole of humanity, and again and again I repeated a prayer for the happiness of all. The history of mankind is far from being a pleasant reading. This very ocean must have witnessed so much injustice and cruelty thro' the ages. How many times its atmosphere must have been pierced by the cries and groans of slaves, and how many prayers must have gone unanswered even if they reached the sun, the moon and the stars. But if the sea has not become red with human blood, if the air has not been poisoned by the sighs of those in pain, and if the light of the stars has not been dimmed by the gloom of those in despair, why should my love for humanity become any the less for reading a little of the history of the iniquity and wrong perpetrated by mankind? If I can love myself forgetting my own countless faults and failings and can build hopes for my future, why should not humanity, a collection of my own images, receive my whole-hearted love in spite of its countless deeds of darkness?

It was with this feeling uppermost in my mind that we arrived in Mombasa to study the experiment in multi-racial unequal co-operation among the peoples of Asia, Europe and Africa.

I could not read or write much on board the ship as I had hoped to, during the eight days of the voyage. But these eight days were full of rich living experience and deep reflection.

IV

EDUCATION AND CASTE DIVISIONS

I had imagined that we would go straight to Nairobi. I could not understand why Shri Appasahib Pant should have arranged a stay of four or five days in Mombasa. The only thing I knew about Mombasa was that it is an important port and a commercial centre of East Africa. We were, therefore, greatly surprised when we saw the beautiful green coastal area on arriving in Mombasa on the lovely morning of May 16.

We were eight in the party. Originally it had been settled that Saroj (Miss Sarojini Nanavati, my secretary) would accompany me. At the last minute Shri Sharad Pandya, my assistant in the proposed Gandhi Museum, expressed a wish to join us. His passport, visa permit etc., had to be arranged by telegram. We thus became a party of three. Meanwhile, Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj was also visiting East Africa at the invitation of Shri Appasahib Pant. He changed his plans to be able to travel with us, and accepted some inconvenience in order to secure accommodation on our ship. He took with him his son, Rahul, and his

little daughter, Suman to give them the benefit of education through travels in new lands. To avoid any inconvenience about food etc. he had with him a couple of servants too. So we grew into a team of eight, all agog to land on the soil of Africa. In fact, most of the ship's passengers gathered near the railings eagerly craning their necks like Africa's giraffes to have a glimpse of the land

"Sacred Land"

There was a hitch at the last minute. A child on board showed signs of chicken pox. There was talk of keeping the ship in quarantine. First and second class passengers are presumed to be safe and are usually saved all inconvenience. Moreover, since we were the guests of India's Commissioner we had no difficulty at all. While others were still waiting we managed to have our bath and breakfast on the ship. Shri Appasahib Pant's private secretary, Tatyia Inamdar, had arrived at the port early in the morning. Shri Pant himself arrived as we were preparing to leave the ship and gave us an affectionate welcome. Before visitors were allowed to board the ship a Press correspondent contrived to accompany the inspecting doctor and asked me for a message. I gave him the following message which was published in a number of papers the same day.

"It is for the first time that I am stepping on the shores of Africa a land which is as sacred to me as my motherland India. It was in Africa that the world discovered the great soul, Mahatma Gandhi. In Africa, people of three continents meet in co-operation and are trying perhaps unwittingly to build a common destiny of human brotherhood.

"I salute the children of the soil, the Africans, as I step on the shores of their motherland. I bring sisterly greetings from India."

We went straight to Nanjibhai's beautiful palatial house, where we were allowed to rest the whole day. In the evening we drove round the city, seeing the port and the fort areas and the main marketing centre. Going along the coast we saw the lighthouse, Government buildings and coral reefs. We were now ready for the next day's crowded programme arranged for us

Ancient Port

It did not take me long to realize that Mombasa belongs as much to the Indians as it does to the Europeans. They have developed quite a prosperous public life here. Under their influence the indigenous people, the Africans, are learning new ways of life, gradually assimilating a new civilization both in its good and bad points.

Mombasa can be called an island. Small ships, called dhows, coming from Arabia and India anchor in the little creek on its north. The gulf in the south is for big steamers. The harbour here is called Kilindini. Wherever you look you find the sea providing a lovely sight. As to the city, it is a clear mixture of the old and the new.

Mombasa is a very ancient port. Nearly two thousand years ago, the ancients discovered that there was a steady north-easterly wind during particular months of the year and that in other months there was an opposite wind in the south-westerly direction. When this fact of the monsoons was once established the brave sailors of Arabia and India began to sail straight to the African coast between December and

April. They would then return to their homelands after their trading was over about the month of August. Once this direct traffic across the seas started trade began to prosper. A means of cultural and material exchange was secured and world's history took a new turn

As Mombasa was an excellent sea port, the Arabs and the Portuguese fought for its possession for centuries. Before A.D. 1660 the Portuguese built a fort here and named it Fort Jesus. How would the 'Prince of Peace' have relished a warlike fort being named after him? This fort is today used as a jail. The flag of the Sultan of Zanzibar flies over it.

A majority of houses here are built on coral reefs. During World War I some ships came here from India. Not having enough goods to carry they brought stones as ballast. These stones were used in building the foundation of a number of houses in one of the streets. Looking at these buildings in the African city standing on stones from India my mind was filled with a variety of feelings. If the world enjoyed peace for a hundred years or so, Mombasa would grow into a magnificent city like our Bombay.

We spent six days in Mombasa. Our time was spent mainly in visiting educational institutions. There are three kinds of educational institutions in the whole of Africa. The whites have institutions of their own, and so have the Africans and Indians. Religious and caste distinctions of the Indians have followed them even here. The Muslims, too, are divided into Agakhanī (Ismailī), Ishnasari and other sects. Among the Hindus we have the Luhanas, the Visa and Oswal, Jains, Patidars and others. These denominations are from among the Gujaratis alone.

Among the Punjabis, the Sikhs have their own separate schools. And even the Sikhs have two *firkas*.

Finally, there are the separate schools for the Roman Catholic Goans who consider themselves a distinct entity. There are separate girls' institutions too, but they are not many. Even among them there are caste or communal distinctions. In all these institutions there is no great difference whatsoever in what is actually taught. The main difference is in religious teaching and in the prayers. Instead of developing faith and piety, I am afraid they encourage communalism and pride in one's own creed. Can religion be fostered by impressing on the minds of children the points of difference between one creed and another? But that is all that is being done; and, of course, the beliefs seem to be meant only to be accepted formally.

Cry of Culture

It is argued that if children of one caste or community are at school with the children of another, that would spoil their culture and their minds would be corrupted. But nobody seems to know what this culture exactly is which is sought so jealously to be preserved. Their ways of life are not different from one another's. The truth is that the different sects and their castes and sub-castes are no more than so many clans and groups. Their individuality is meant to be preserved in order to secure the group-self-interest. Caste may be defined as a group of families who can intermarry. The rich in each caste always make sure that their philanthropy benefits its own members only. Religion, culture and spiritualism are conjured today only for the preservation of this class-narrowness and class-interest.

As a result of such class distinctions there is hardly any homogeneity among the Hindus of East Africa. A collection of various social groups goes by the general name of Hindu. We boast that Hinduism is an example of "unity in diversity". But in actual practice the stress today is on diversity alone. If there is any unity to be seen today it is in our common ignorance, short-sightedness and obstinate inertia.

How Caste Destroys

Some people advocate that we should abolish all caste distinctions but should preserve the four main *varnas*. But these four *varnas*, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, are there today only in name. The ideals of the four *varnas* as they are understood by the orthodox today can succeed only in making human life one-sided. Our humanity will not find full expression until we do away with both *varnas* and castes alike. During my travels, I told our people that in the golden age of Satya (pristine truth), which, according to our scriptures, is the highest state of society, there could be only one God and one *varna*. The scriptures themselves have proclaimed this. When people deteriorated and "the age of Truth" vanished, *varnas* and castes had to be invented. But castes lead to conflicts. The ancient poet-king Bhartrihari said pithily, "When you have caste-conflicts no other fire is required to destroy society."

In a far-off country like Africa no one conforms to caste restrictions in daily life. Almost all homes have African servants who wash clothes, fetch water, cook the meals and look after the children. Upper class people, *i.e.*, those who can live in an expensive style, are given to non-vegetarian diet and drink. There are

exceptions, no doubt, but it is wise not to look for them. My purpose here is not to comment on social life here, but to raise the question how people living such uniform lives can talk of "culture" and purity of their caste tradition.

Separate Institutions

Separate educational institutions for each caste and sub-caste not only lead to waste of money but also defeat the very purpose of education. Philanthropists are generous where money is required for erecting imposing buildings but grudge it when it is to be spent for efficiency. Philanthropists say to themselves "Imposing buildings are seen and admired by the people and the donors rise in the estimation of the public; but who cares to examine if the education given is worthwhile or not?" One envies the nice buildings which house many of the educational institutions in East Africa; but one cannot help being distressed to see the indifferent quality of education being imparted in these beautiful buildings. Some institutions are no doubt well managed, but the general complaint everywhere is that good teachers are not available. If at all you get them, they do not stay. The teachers' complaint, on the other hand, is that there is so much interference from ignorant parents and managers of institutions that it is impossible to cultivate habits of application and discipline among the boys.

Wherever the teachers are good one can at once see the result in the atmosphere of the institution. But one cannot help saying that on the whole our education in East Africa is in a sad plight.

It is high time our people organized their own independent Board of Education for the whole of East

Africa. It should consist of the best educationists, experienced leaders and public men of outstanding stature who can be depended upon for far-sighted advice and guidance. Disregarding religious, communal or caste distinctions, all educational institutions should be handed over to such a board. Let each institution have, if you will, its separate funds and budget. The board can also promise to safeguard particular interests in special cases. But education can be improved only if all institutions work under a single board. Encouraged by such an influential and independent board teachers would begin to show life and individuality and education would prosper.

It was a matter of great joy to me to find that Gujarati was the medium of instruction in both Hindu and Muslim schools. The fact is that the people coming from Cutch, Kathiawad and Gujarat are a single community. They are, of course, united where trade and commerce are concerned. Even socially some Hindu and Muslim families are so closely related that they are like one family. Hostile feelings between Hindus and Muslims have been created at many places by those who felt compelled to divide the joint life of Indians in East Africa simply because of the partition in India. There are controversies going on now as to who started the quarrels and who acted only in retaliation. Both sides admit that there was really no need for creating these distinctions in East Africa and that they are doing immense harm to both.

Hindu-Muslim Clash

I told our people at various places that I had had to take injections against many diseases when leaving India for Africa. Indians coming to East Africa should be required to have a special injection against the

disease of communalism, too. Newspapers coming from India should be fumigated and disinfected against this epidemic. That was the only way to save ourselves in Africa from the virus of communalism.

At many places there are Indian Associations formed by our people to protect their political rights. Some people have now, after the partition of India, begun to object to the adjective "Indian". This blind intolerance has reached such a stage that there is a demand for the partitioning of Indian Associations and division of their funds on the lines of the partition of India !

In the few educational institutions where Hindu and Muslim children study together communal proportion is insisted on in the appointment of teachers. Similarly, proportional representation is demanded in the formation of the managing boards. But everywhere leaders of both communities emphatically declare that originally they never had any such feeling of separatism. They had to become 'realistic' and to pursue a 'firm' policy in self-defence only because they found a change in the mentality of the people on the other side.

There is at least a linguistic unity among our people, the overwhelming majority being Gujaratis, but a handful of Punjabis have started trouble by advocating the claims of the national language. Punjabi Muslims favour Urdu, while Sikhs of the Punjab support Hindi. The Sikhs approached the Education Department and have had Gurumukhi recognized as a medium of instruction

The Maharashtrians are so few in number in East Africa that they cannot afford to complicate the language controversy. They send their children to

Gujarati schools. The children have come to no harm by being taught through the medium of Gujarati. They teach Marathi at home to maintain their own traditions and contact with recent Marathi literature. If the Punjabis followed a similar policy, the problem of education would be easily solved. Nearly 90 per cent of our people here know Gujarati. If Hindi is India's national language and Urdu that of Pakistan, Gujarati is the language of common intercourse of the Indians in East Africa. If we start disputes over the question of language as we have on the question of religion, the Indian community will completely disintegrate.

I have given the gist of my two months' experience in the very beginning here to avoid having to discuss the problem of language in bits at various places.

V

SOCIAL WORK IN MOMBASA

An interesting personality of Mombasa is Dr. Karve, son of our Maharshi Annasaheb Karve of Poona. Meeting him one gets the impression that he is a matter-of-fact realist and a man of the world, but he is like his father an idealist to the core.

For years he has been running an excellent hospital called Pandya Clinic in a spirit of selfless devoted service. The Pandya family is known for its public-spirited philanthropy. The hospital is named after the family because of a generous and magnificent gift by them. Dr. Karve is the very soul of the institution. It is housed in a rented building built during

the war to serve as a sailors' home. Dr. Karve himself took us round the place and showed us all the departments of the hospital. It was a delight to hear anecdotes about his father's life from the lips of Dr. Karve. I was able to appreciate some of old Annasahib's qualities only after hearing Dr. Karve. Annasahib once came to visit his son here and stayed with him for some time.

Pant's Popularity

Another such physician is Dr. Sheth. His wife is the daughter of an old friend of mine, Kashinath Raghunath Mitra, a well-known editor and publisher of Bombay. But the towering personality in these parts is that of Shri Pant. Owing both to his sociability and his position the Indians of East Africa look up to Shri Appasahib Pant as their guide, philosopher and friend. Since it was he who had arranged our whole programme, all the well-known people joined in receiving us. We did not have to search for the leading local workers.

When Shri Pant arrived in East Africa many leading Muslims avoided him, saying they did not care to meet him, since he was a Hindu. Later, when they discovered that Appasahib made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, that he belonged to all and considered everyone his own, that he was ready to serve all equally and was a staunch nationalist, following Gandhiji's and Jawaharlal Nehru's liberal policy, they were gradually drawn towards him. Today he is held in equal esteem and affection both by Hindus and Muslims. Everyone considers it a privilege to have him as a guest. When he goes on tour many people accompany him in their own cars to be able to have an opportunity of being near him.

Greater Kabaka

I heard an amusing incident in this connection. Once when Appasahib was touring in the interior of Uganda there were as many as eleven such cars with him. The innocent Africans of the villages were greatly impressed. Their own Kabaka (ruler), they said, had only four or five cars with him when he drove out. This Indian Kabaka must be a greater ruler since he had eleven cars with him !

Appasahib is as outspoken as he is polite. That is why he has made a great impression on the whites of East Africa. He knows the art of winning people by putting things in a proper perspective. Someone has described his influence very aptly in a single remark : " It is impossible for anyone to be mean in Appasahib's presence "

Appasahib is a man of untiring activity. He must have been here for about three years only but he has by now travelled nearly forty thousand miles. He is known to everybody in the country, big or small. The British people like him. The Africans respect him and look to him with admiration and hope. As to the Indians, I have found them never tiring of praising him. It is Appasahib, they say, who has raised our community in other people's eyes. He has given our people a new outlook. Thinking people have now begun to realize the importance and the mission of India. What they are worried about is that they would not know what to do with themselves when Appasahib is appointed to a more important post elsewhere by the Government of India.

Appasahib wins people's affection with his kindly humanity. He does not concern himself with

immediate results because he fully realizes how good deeds work through generations.

School for Stragglers

I was specially interested in a small and apparently insignificant educational institution of Mombasa. East Africa is so short of educational facilities that even education has to be rationed. In schools one set of students studies for the first three days of the week and another group attends the same classes during the latter half of the week. Some students attend morning classes, others get their turn in the evenings. This happens at many places. No wonder, then, that students who fail twice are expelled.

An institution has been started through the efforts of Dr. Sheth to provide what little education is possible for those thus expelled from other schools. There were three African boys studying along with Indian students in this school. Backward, weak and frustrated students also have enthusiasm for studying. If they are not a success in ordinary schools, the fault often is not theirs. Circumstances and the educational system are oftentimes to blame. It is well known that Madame Montessori developed her world-famous system as a result of her efforts to teach backward and defective children in Italy. The Indian Republic School of Mombasa can prove that even those abandoned by society can have great qualities and a future.

Houses for the Poor

Dr. Karve of the Pandya Clinic has organized another public activity, a co-operative housing scheme. Under this scheme good houses are built for poor Indians who are charged concessional rents.

Poor families are thus enabled to live clean and respectable lives. When I visited these houses I found the cleanliness and cheerfulness of the outside and the inside of these houses reflected on the countenances of the inmates. Clean, attractive houses create an atmosphere of self-respect and self-esteem. If it is true that healthy minds live in healthy bodies, it is equally true that decent houses can also help to make the lives of those who live in them clean and decent to a large extent.

I liked some of the libraries in Mombasa. In one of them I even found the recent scholarly book by the Gujarati poet Khabardar on a comparative study of the Vedas and the Avesta Gathas.

One of the popular figures in Mombasa is Shri Master. He is a theosophist. He presents to the people Gandhiji's ideas synthesized with theosophy and thus creates, in his own gentle way, a spiritual atmosphere. His sermons have good influence on those around him.

The Social Service League is an old institution of Mombasa which serves the community without any distinction of caste or creed. A wealthy Arab businessman has donated a big house of his own to the League to provide a permanent home for it.

Children's Education

Another activity which attracted my attention on arrival in Mombasa was the establishment of children's schools. I was told that nearly 40 students trained by the late Gijubhai Badheka of Bhavnagar are engaged in the important work of children's education in various parts of Africa. People perhaps do not know that before the late Gijubhai dedicated himself to his educational mission, he had been to East

Africa to practise law and had even picked up the Swahili language. It was during his stay there that he found that life's mission could be realized by educating children and advocating freedom for them.

Shri Somabhai Bhavsar and his wife have plunged themselves in the work of children's education in Mombasa. Shri Bhavsar is an old student of the Gujarat Vidyapith and a poet. He has written a small booklet *Immortal Gandhi* in the style of Gijubhai. The book itself has become immortal, having been translated into the Swahili and Luganda languages.

The Agakhani kindergarten school is also a well-managed institution. One could not help noticing the smart bearing and cheerfulness of the children there. Since I am going to write about the Agakhanis' activities later, I shall not describe here the important technical college they run in Mombasa.

Among the Muslim workers I was drawn to Shri Kadarbhai. He has spent his whole lifetime in public work of all sorts. At one time he had the Aga Khan's support. His ability in running institutions and collecting funds for them is unrivalled. Though old, he still has the enthusiasm of youth.

Racial Harmony

I was eager to meet the Africans in Mombasa but could hardly find them anywhere. I met some of them at the United Kenya Club. Besides Africans, there were some whites there too. During my talk with the members I said a few words on the question of racial adjustment to which they reacted very well.

I told them that since ancient times people of many races and communities had settled down in

India. There were Aryans and non-Aryans, Dravidians, aborigines, Scythians, Huns, Chinese, Parsis, Pathans, Moghuls, Portuguese, Frenchmen, Jews and Englishmen. It might appear as if God had intended collecting all branches of the human family in India. For thousands of years we had experimented in our country to see how they could all live together in mutual co-operation. We made grave mistakes too, for which we had had to pay heavily. We created separate localities for the low-caste scavengers. We encouraged the distinction of high and low. We tried the weapon of social boycott, but at last found that such remedies were more injurious than the original disease itself. Fortunately, our seers and sages gave us one basic saving formula: "Try and experiment as you like, but never take recourse to violence." Our faith in one common humanity once forced us in the past to abandon a war of extirpation against the people of the serpent totem.

Today our castes are not based on any difference in the colour of one's skin. We abolished untouchability as soon as we attained independence. Our wells and restaurants, our schools and our temples are now thrown open to Harijans. People of three continents living in Africa could learn a good deal from this — our experience of ages.

Goans and Women

Goa's Christians are a community by themselves. I went to meet them, and told them that they could not be happy as long as they continued to neglect their mother-tongue, Konkani. I pleaded with them to unite with other Indians. I deliberately did not refer to the political situation in Goa since I was aware of

the sharp differences of opinion among the Christians. Some of them want to join the Indian Union throwing off the Portuguese yoke. Others want to be identified with Portugal and claim to have a distinct culture.

It would be surprising if Indian women abroad did not work unitedly. Even in their own country they had put up a united front, forgetting all distinctions of caste or creed, out of a common faith in nationalism and humanity. Women behaved splendidly in India even when Hindus and Muslims became mutual enemies in their greed for more rights and privileges. There is a fairly successful women's organization in Mombasa run under the able leadership of Shrimati Sondhi. My first message to the women here was that they should consider African women and children as their own people and be ready to serve them. Hesitation in taking such a step would be natural. But being inherently religious-minded they should not find it difficult to start the movement and show progress. Women who on being married made a stranger's home their own, should not find any difficulty in similarly treating the women and children of this land as their kith and kin.

The time thus spent in Mombasa was very valuable and entertaining. In this gateway of East Africa I could acquaint myself with most of the problems of the country and the forces working behind them. I was able, therefore, to continue my journey with open eyes and with an awareness of the major problems.

VI

NAIROBI

Nairobi is the capital of Kenya. It can also be considered the capital of the whole of British East Africa.

We left Mombasa on the evening of May 21, 1950. We had our dinner in the dining car on the train. Perhaps there is no difficulty about first-class passengers dining there along with the white people. Most of us were vegetarians, but we had given them previous notice, so there was no difficulty on that score either.

There is no big station between Mombasa and Nairobi. Early next morning we found ourselves in the Kenya Highlands. It was pleasantly cold, and the fertile land around was a delight to the eyes. Soon we crossed the river Athi—so tiny it is that one would hesitate to call it even a rivulet.

National Park

Before reaching Nairobi, our train passed through the celebrated National Park. We saw quite a number of wild animals from the windows of our compartment. Shri Appasahib, with the practised eye of a sportsman, would be the first to spot them and draw our attention to them with the enthusiasm of one whose love of Nature never grows stale.

The first to appear were the giraffes, with their long necks like anti-aircraft guns. Then came the ostriches—the camel-birds who can neither fly like birds nor run like animals and yet manage to cover great distances with speed. The “wilder beasts” were rather uncouth animals. The antelopes proudly

displayed their horns. Appasahib promised that we would soon have an opportunity of seeing all these animals at close quarters

The rains were there to welcome us at Nairobi station. We were introduced to all the local leaders who had gathered there. It is a joy to be thus received, but how can one remember a string of names pronounced rapidly, and then correctly to associate them with faces that also pass before one in quick succession !

Our host, Shri Tatya Inamdar, had joined us from Mombasa. We were, therefore, received at the station by the hospitable smiles of his wife and daughters. A school-friend of Sarojini's — Shri Jal Contractor — was there, eager to meet her after many years.

The seven days we spent in Nairobi were packed to the full with so many programmes that though they have left vivid impressions and many sweet memories, it is not possible to recall each event in its proper sequence

Whites' Attitude

There are more Europeans in Nairobi than in other parts of Kenya. Indians also have settled there in large numbers. The Africans, who are the children of the soil, serve mostly as menials and labourers.

Seaside towns like Mombasa, Tanga, Zanzibar, Dar-es-Salaam and Lindi have a comparatively warmer climate, which does not suit the Europeans. They, therefore, have somehow managed to take possession of all the cooler places in Africa. One cannot forget the questionable means the British used even in India to gain control of hill stations like Mahabaleshwar, Shillong, Darjeeling or Cherapunji. Kenya

is the Scotland of the white settlers in Africa. The Africans have not been able to forget or forgive their high-handedness in taking possession of these dear lands of theirs. Stories of the overbearing conduct of the white men of Kenya are too well known to bear repetition here. No wonder that the Kenya settlers are found to have sympathy with Dr. Malan's policy in South Africa. We could meet very few of them in Nairobi.

The European officers, although under the influence of the landed settlers, are more realistic, and understand the world situation better. I was told that occasionally an outstanding statesman from Britain visits this colony and impresses on the settlers that in the post-war world it is no longer possible or desirable to continue to behave like a superior race, and treat the natives of Africa or Asia with un-Christian arrogance and contempt. But the fact remains that the white settlers of Kenya form a well-organized, determined community of great power and influence

Ways of Living

It must be said to the credit of the Europeans that they have developed great powers of organization, and cultivated high standards of civilized life. They choose the best sites for their townships and make the land around clean and beautiful. The towns are well planned, and the roads are broad and clean. The water supply and electricity are adequate. They build elegant houses, well ventilated and illuminated, with gardens and orchards surrounding them.

The generality of our people have different tastes and standards. Our living quarters are crowded. Some

of our well-to-do people do provide themselves with modern conveniences and surround themselves with comforts and luxuries, but all do not succeed in maintaining the foreign style.

We have our own ideas of purity and cleanliness. We are very punctilious in the cleanliness of our food and person, but we often neglect our surroundings. With many of us cleanliness is a ritual involving the use of large quantities of water. People going barefoot have often to walk on wet ground and thus make the whole place muddy. We must make our kitchens, bathrooms and lavatories conform to a new standard. I have heard Indian leaders deploring the carelessness of our people — and specially of our womenfolk. But few, if any, have the patience to educate them into a better way of life. A little training and good examples are far better than tirades and criticism. Instead of introducing wholesome reforms, some of our people merely adopt the western style of dress, western ways of eating and drinking, and the western language for social intercourse. They succeed only in cutting themselves off from the rest of their countrymen and form a class by themselves. In spite of all this they do not seem to have shed their caste prejudices.

Race Prejudice

Under these circumstances, social intercourse between Europeans and Indians is not easy. Some of them prefer to have separate quarters for the two races; and the Europeans, in their pride of being the ruling race, wish to reserve the best places for themselves. There is discrimination even in the supply of municipal amenities. Differences in the ways of life are used for defending colour prejudice. Once this

colour prejudice is accepted, separate compartments in the railway and separate seats in buses and trams follow inevitably.

Race prejudice and racial injustice is the greatest curse of the African continent, south of the Sahara.

Shri Appasahib had very thoughtfully arranged that we should meet all types of people. Sir Phillip Mitchell — the Governor of Kenya — was on leave. He is regarded as an outstanding statesman of the British Empire. People talked very highly of him as a man of great tact and understanding. We called on the acting Governor. During the interview with him, I learnt of Nature's vagaries in Africa. "Africa is a fertile land," he said, "but we have to face scarcity of water. But for this handicap, this land could maintain many more people." I suggested that rain water, which was plentiful in Africa, could be stored in tanks as our kings had done in ancient India. They paid more attention to the building of tanks than to the digging of canals.

Communism in India

Whenever we met Europeans, one question they invariably asked was "What about Communism? Is there any likelihood of Communism spreading in India?" I could see that this was the greatest anxiety — nay, an obsession — with the Westerners. I assured them that there was no scope for Communism in India. In the first place, our civilization and culture are based on an altogether different basis. Secondly, Gandhiji's teaching of non-violence has taken root in the psychology of our people. Communism spreads where there is social, racial or economic injustice and where people have no hope of redress. We abolished untouchability which was strongly entrenched for

thousands of years behind religious sanctions. The masses thus have come to see that free India stands for social justice. So many kings and ruling princes consented to surrender their power. We are planning to abolish the zamindari system and landlords themselves have promised to part with their land for suitable compensation. We have introduced the democratic principle of adult franchise — undoubtedly the biggest experiment in democracy in the world today. In view of these great achievements of the Nehru Government, the people have come to believe that they will receive justice at its hands. The Communists were able to create some trouble only where the administration was lax as in the case of the Nizam's territory. The Communists would not have created the little unrest they did, if they had had the strength and confidence to succeed in the coming elections. Communism is a symptom of ill health in a country's body politic. It can never take root in a country where social, economic and racial justice exists. Take, for instance, Sweden and Norway. They are so very near Russia, yet they are not afraid of Communism, for the simple reason that wealth is evenly distributed there and the common man is happy and prosperous. In India conditions at present are deplorable no doubt, but we have made a good beginning.

Some credit goes to the British people themselves. People's faith in Gandhism was strengthened when they found that the British recognized the non-violent strength built up by Gandhiji and agreed to India's independence. They left India as friends. No bitterness, therefore, against the British was left

behind. The people feel that the good of India lies in accepting Gandhiji's philosophy of non-violence.

Racial Co-operation

On one occasion I had the good fortune to have a mixed audience of all the three races. I spoke there about the co-operation in Africa amongst peoples of the three continents. It is an unequal co-operation today. As a consequence, nobody is happy. True co-operation can arise only if the Europeans shed their feeling of superiority and cease to exact special privileges. Indians can qualify themselves for such co-operation only when they begin to consider themselves permanent citizens of Africa as well as India and cultivate the friendliest relations with Africans. The Africans in their turn must shed their inertia, educate themselves and develop non-violent strength.

At another place, I spoke on the significance of the Commonwealth. The British Commonwealth, to start with, was a family concern. It was the British who ruled in Canada, South Africa, East Africa, New Zealand and Australia. As soon as India became independent, the British invited Ceylon, Pakistan and India to join the Commonwealth as equal partners. It was a new experiment in history. The Commonwealth today is an example of inter-racial co-operation. Ceylon with its Buddhism, Pakistan accepting Islam as its State religion and India, a secular State fostering all religions with impartiality — all bound together by a democratic ideal — have joined the Commonwealth. It is a venture full of unbounded possibilities. This step of the British is but a beginning. There is scope for the inclusion, in due time, of new races and

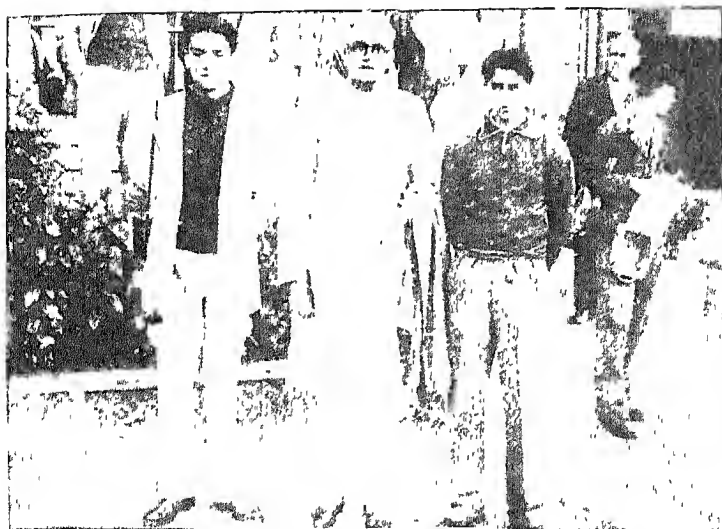
new nations into the Commonwealth. Such an association is in keeping with India's past history.

Indians' Duty

Having joined the Commonwealth voluntarily and after due consideration it is our duty to be loyal to it. It is needless to say that loyalty does not mean that we should support all its actions — whether good or bad. Loyalty demands that we should always have a friendly attitude towards the Commonwealth and its component parts; that we should wish to see it progress towards world brotherhood; and we should help it and accept its help in all good causes.

As it was our duty to have cordial relations with the rulers, it was equally our duty to treat Africans with affection. We must learn to respect their personality. It is not enough that we pick up their language just sufficiently to give orders to our domestic servants. We should learn it so well as to enable us to share their joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations. We should help them in their efforts for self-development and regeneration. They should be given opportunities of training their children along with ours in our schools. Our philanthropy should flow towards the education of African children. They should feel that our presence in their land is a blessing. We are here neither as original inhabitants of the land, nor as its rulers. Our claim to be citizens here should be through service only. Our strength here is neither that of numbers nor of power. We should root ourselves in the soil through useful service and brotherly goodwill.

As a token of friendship and a gesture of



At Nairobi with Indian Youths

neighbourliness free India has offered some scholarships to African students for higher studies in India. Shri Appasahib has succeeded in persuading Indian settlers to offer twelve scholarships of a similar nature. The Spinners' Association of Wardha has decided to grant six modest scholarships to such African students as want to learn hand-spinning and hand-weaving as a village industry. On behalf of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha I announced the grant of three scholarships for the study of Hindi—the national language of India. The Africans have begun to have friendly feelings towards us.

Service and Gratitude

Some of our people said to me, "We accept all that you say. We shall do everything we can for the people here, but we must tell you our bitter experience. Gratitude is not a characteristic of these people."

My reply was that even assuming for the moment that the charge was true, it was nothing to be surprised about. Even gratitude sometimes proves suicidal for a people who are robbed of their land and who have to live in constant fear and dependence. Were not their forefathers bought and sold as slaves till recently? We heard similar complaints about the Harijans in India. In Marathi the word 'slave' also means a rogue, the implication being that slaves could not help becoming rogues. Restore to people their self-respect and they will gradually develop all the better human qualities.

Can we expect people to be grateful when we take away their all and return a trifling part of it and parade it as our generosity? How patiently the

Africans have put up with all kinds of injustice ! Theirs is a civilization of contentment. They have lived in mud and thatch huts. In their vast country they had not built a single stone house, temple or palace. They were not prepared to hire themselves for labour. The Government imposed an iniquitous poll-tax on them to force them to work for the white settlers. They were thus forced to give up their simple life of contentment and consent to be the helots of an alien civilization. Have the missionaries, who spend their whole lives in serving the Africans, ever complained of their ingratitude ? The Africans, whether they follow Islam, Christianity or their ancestral religion, are not fanatics. Judge them by the virtues they show in their family and tribal life Judge them by the simple and artistic dress they have evolved for themselves. Judge them by their soulful music, their rhythmic dance and their primitive but forceful art. Let us first learn to love them. Then alone shall we be able to understand them. No race has a monopoly of good qualities. Given time and favourable circumstances, these Africans will one day take their rightful share in the evolution of a multi-racial civilization and culture. Some of their students studying at present in Indian Universities are already giving a very good account of themselves

VII

THE VEILED LAKE

Our young friend Suryakant was eager to show us all the sites around Nairobi. "Have you seen Lake Kikuyu?" he asked me "No, nor even heard of it," I replied

"Why, it is a rare sight—a lake covered with moss and grass; on which one can walk from one end to the other! Let us go there tomorrow morning."

We started before dawn. The distance of eleven miles was pleasantly punctuated with occasional glimpses of wild animals—specially giraffes.

The Kilimanjaro

Just as the sun was about to rise, we saw before us on the horizon, the rounded peak of the great Kilimanjaro—the pride of East Africa. The dawn spread its magic all around and the white snow-covered peak became a glory of golden pink. It was surprising how nature could combine austerity with pomp and create a vision which once seen haunts you for the rest of your days

We reached Lake Kikuyu just when the grass was about to shed its dew drops. It was an irregular, triangular patch of green with no suspicion of water underneath. We reached the edge and getting out of the car, hazarded a few steps over the surface which had appeared so firm. The rubbery elastic turf beneath our feet yielded dangerously but we found that all of us could walk on the surface. If we stood in one place for some time, the ground would yield and water would appear. There were a few holes here

and there revealing the water underneath. It is said that it was possible to dive in at one hole and come up at another by swimming below the surface.

At first glance the Kikuyu Lake appears to be just the bottom of a dried up lake, but the fact is that a pump at one corner of the lake works continuously to supply a part of Nairobi with good water, without the level of water going down. There must be perennial springs underneath.

In the panoply of nature lakes are mirrors that reflect, in their illumined calm, the wayward clouds and the infinite stars of the sky. Why then did Kikuyu, like a lady of the harem, veil herself? Did the surrounding hills, like an old mother-in-law, compel this bride to conceal her beauty because out of all the lakes of this world she was particularly forward and brazen?

A Wonderland

But Africa has greater wonders veiled below its surface than this little stripling of a lake. In fact it is a wonderland for the geologist as also for the anthropologist.

As I contemplate the boldness of imagination of the geologists, I feel like comparing them to our Vedic ancestors who laid the foundation of cosmogony and then proceeded to describe the genesis of the very gods themselves! But geology rests on firmer ground. It combines in itself the bold imagination of the epic poets and the exactitude of the physical sciences. Geological hypotheses are not accepted unless they are backed by adequate scientific proofs.

Take for instance the huge continent of Africa. How was it born? It has two great deserts—the Sahara and the Kalahari. Were they originally great

seas that were drained out because their beds were thrown up by some cataclysmic events? Today we find two mighty rifts in East Africa, hundreds of miles long, 30 to 50 miles wide, with a depth sometimes of 2,500 feet. What caused these rifts? Some imagine that these rifts were caused by the pressure of the oceans on the sides of the continent being relaxed in some mysterious way. According to another theory, there must have been volcanic disturbances that caused these rifts. But these rifts must have been, at some later stage, broken up by fresh volcanic eruptions, resulting in the formation of various lakes, like the present-day lakes Albert Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika, Rukwa, Nyanza and so on, in one rift. The Eastern rift has now the chain of lakes Eyasi, Natron, Magdi, Nyaza, Hennington, Byringo, Rudolf and others. This rift ultimately reaches as far as the Dead Sea in Palestine taking the Red Sea in its stride. Between these two rifts, as if caught in a pair of tongs, is the great Lake of Amar-sar — now known as Lake Victoria, separating Uganda from Kenya.

The Rift Valley

We got our first glimpse of this rift valley when we went a few miles from Nairobi down a well-planned road built by Italian prisoners of war. We could see tall mountains on the opposite side of the rift with occasional craters gaping to the skies. The valley below is a rich level land studded here and there with small hills. These also were formed by volcanic eruptions of prehistoric times.

My imagination travelled back to the powerful explosions that gave birth to the rift and its volcanic mountains. It was impossible to conjure up the tremendous explosion as the bowels of the earth were

split open ; then I realized that there could have been neither man nor animal to be dumbfounded by that thunderous noise. The explosions must have been terrifying, but there was nobody living to be frightened. Echoing in the lifeless and shapeless surroundings, the sound must have reverberated into infinite space until it was lost in eternal silence. It was this silence which gradually brooded into life — forests, animals, birds and men. Life which had flourished until then stilled when heavens withheld the rains for ten thousand years. Then again the cycle began — the cycle of budding life and utter death. Every time new life came into being with the first drops of its sustenance and thriving it flourished as a remote ancestor of the world we know today.

Did the giraffes that met us on the way have any idea of this eternal round of life and death ? They peered in all directions, their heads crowning their long necks, their short horns tilted as if binoculars had been impatiently pushed up on their foreheads.

Corrindon Museum

We returned from the enchanting Rift Valley to the Corrindon Museum in Nairobi which under the guidance of one of the world's greatest geologists, Dr. Lecky, unveils the mysteries of the Dark Continent. Dr. Lecky's great researches trace the story of Africa through millions of years, not only the history of its men, but the development of its innumerable fauna.

During his excavations he discovered skulls which provide the missing link between ape and man. He showed one to us with great pride, and explained : " This is the protruding bone of our eyebrows ; this hollow was already large enough to contain the

human brain." Pointing to a picture, he said : " That genealogical tree needs the help of geologists in your country for work which concerns the whole of mankind."

I replied : " What you want can only be investigated in the Shivalik Hills, which are older than the Himalayas."

" I agree with you," he said.

Food and Size

We talked of Brucefoot, the geologist whose researches in South India unearthed the famous jaw of a savage, which was photographed by my father ; and Dr Lecky threw fresh light on our food problem when he explained : " Man's size depends on what he eats. Even a large beast like a hippo or a rhino would become as small as a mouse in ten or twenty thousand years if it doesn't get enough to eat."

For two hours, we ranged over many topics : botany, butterflies, the mimicry in nature, the various species of birds and animals. Our talk was almost as diverse as the contents of Dr. Lecky's room, which was a miniature museum with its miscellanea of books and other things. Clearly, he was like a true savant too engrossed in the work to which all his energies are devoted to care either for his dress or surroundings. His country has reason to be proud of him.

The well-arranged museum, with its stuffed animals placed in their natural surroundings, reminded me of Bombay's Prince of Wales museum. It would be excellent if curators of museums were sent abroad to study museums in other countries and then asked to write of all they had gathered there in a popular style.

VIII

AROUND NAIROBI

One day we visited the Government industrial school at Kabete. Here African boys are given training in carpentry, blacksmithy, tin work, brick-laying, electrician's work, tailoring, shoe-making, etc. The courses range from one to three years. We found the students keen on their work, which we found to be of a good quality.

The teachers were all white craftsmen. I asked one of them in private if it was true that African boys were less intelligent than boys of other races. After a little thought he replied : " Generally it is true. But those of them who are clever are exceptionally clever. After three years' of training they become self-supporting and can make a good living."

When I met our Punjabi Sikhs, I told them that if institutions like the one at Kabete were multiplied, they would easily be ousted by the Africans. They should, therefore, begin to employ Africans in their factories so that good relations between Asians and Africans were maintained. If we were forced to leave the country, we should be able to depart with the satisfaction of having made the Africans self-supporting and return to India with their good wishes.

National Park

One of the attractions of Nairobi is its national park. It occupies an area of 40 square miles, mostly grass-plains with a few trees wherever there are hillocks. Killing, teasing or disturbing the animals in the park is strictly prohibited. This restriction, of

course, applies to human beings only. Animals among themselves can do what they like according to the law of the jungle. Human beings may not interfere even to protect one animal against another. But even lions in the park kill no more than is necessary. If a lion is not hungry, he does not kill any animal even if it is nearby. There are all kinds of beasts, birds and reptiles in the park.

Despite our efforts we did not see a single lion. We saw deer, an animal known as *buddhoo* (wild-beest) resembling a cow, zebras and giraffes. We also saw a hippopotamus wallowing in muddy water. Deer of many kinds roamed about. They did not appear to be oppressed by the presence of lions. One can hardly recognize an ostrich when it is grazing with its neck down. But when it lifts its head, it appears to have an arrogant, inquisitive look. When ostriches run they give the impression that they are carrying heavy valuables under their wings.

An African Leader

One day we went to see an African leader, Shri Peter Koinange, who lives about 30 miles away from Nairobi. He had toured India recently. A man of filial piety, he introduced us to his father. Peter explained to us how his six mothers lived in separate huts with their children. Peter Koinange has started over 200 schools for his community, the Kikuyu tribe. He receives no help from the Government. The education imparted in these schools aims at turning out people who can serve their community. They do not train students for work under the whites or for Government jobs. I shall have to speak about this activity in detail later.

Shri Meghijibhai Shah, an able and enterprising

industrial magnate of East Africa, took us one day to see his wattle-bark factory and the colony he has built for his workers at Thika. We motored 34 miles along a very good road. The factory is situated in a lovely spot half way up a hill.

At Thika we saw the two beautiful little waterfalls—Thika and Chania. A waterfall is ever an intoxicating sight. The more one stands there watching, the more difficult it becomes to move away! Both the waterfalls were rushing forth in glorious abandon, changing the reddish muddy colour of their water to pure and shining gold in their headlong descent.

The Europeans have built a luxurious hotel at a vantage point opposite the falls, with a beautiful garden around it. One could well envy the swimming pool and other amenities there. But the hotel caters only to the rich and that also for the members of the ruling race.

Hotels and Temples

How characteristic of the two civilizations! Indians when they find themselves in the presence of Nature's grandeur and sublimity instinctively think of building a temple and turning it into a place of prayer where devotees could sit and contemplate on Nature and Nature's Lord. It is equally characteristic of our people that once they come to know of the sanctity of a place, they make it into a place of pilgrimage. Large numbers gather turning the whole place into a bazar with little or no idea of sanitation.

The Europeans, on the other hand, turn such a place into a pleasure resort. They make it clean and beautiful but immediately reserve it for the rich only.

What a boon it would be for mankind if the best characteristics of both races could be united!

IX

THE TOUR BEGINS

It was only when we left Nairobi that we felt that we were beginning our travels in Africa. The reason was that during our stay in Nairobi we felt as if we were in our own home.

Our host, Shri Taty Inamdar, Private Secretary to Shri Appasahib Pant, was a very old acquaintance of mine. He had submitted an admirable essay on the architecture of Northern Gujarat when I happened to be the President of the Art Section of the Gujarati Literary Conference of 1936 at Ahmedabad. Mahatma Gandhi was the President. Later, we met at the Haripura Congress. Shri Inamdar has travelled in Europe and Japan to study the educational systems of various countries; and educationists are easily drawn to each other by something like a family feeling.

Our Nairobi Home

The moment we entered their home, Shakuntala Bai (Mrs Inamdar) gave us a very warm welcome. My secretary, Sarojini Nanavati, Sharad Pandya and myself were treated not as guests but as members of the family. Little Usha was specially sweet, singing at our prayers and making our comfort, her particular care. Her elder sisters, Lata and Rajani, and their shy brother Vinay also became good friends. There were two cats, one very affectionate big dog and a voluble kusuko (blue parrot) in the Inamdar household. This kusuko would greet guests and also wake up the household in the morning with his shrill reproachful

cries. Waghya, the dog, was, as his name signified, a veritable tiger. He looked fierce and could growl intimidatingly, but was very affectionate the moment he was assured that the newcomers were friends of the family.

The cats, on the other hand, being by nature gold-diggers went around demanding love and caresses from everyone. The cats had contrasting colours. I, therefore, named one Poornima (Full Moon) and the other Amavasya (New Moon). We were thus a happy family.

Who could leave such a home without regrets? The only relieving feature was that Tatyá our host was to accompany us in our African tour.

Poetry of the Skies

From Nairobi we flew straight towards the sea as far as Mombasa where we changed the plane and went south to Tanga.

We started at dawn. Below us we saw the beautiful plantations of the Europeans, with a sprinkling of African huts between them. Both the races are fond of the open air. But what a difference in their modes of life!

The roads running along the hills, the streams of water flowing between them and the varied green of vegetation on the volcanic red soil, everything looked enchanting from above. Air travel has created a new field of enjoyment—the poetry of the skies. To a student of geography an air-journey is a great aid in studying the lie of the land, the curves of rivers and the expanse of forests. But for one who from childhood has loved nature and striven to realize the Divine through nature, an air journey is a spiritual feast. The sun, the moon, the stars by night and the clouds,

mountains, rivers, forests, seas and little dots of human habitation, all form an integrated panorama of nature, helping one to contemplate on the Lord who is imminent in nature.

On entering the aeroplane I chose the best seat and gluing my eyes to the window proceeded to devour all the world that could be seen during the whole journey.

Three Mountains

On the left appeared before us Mt. Kenya, the presiding deity of this part of the country. Up to a certain height its slopes are richly alive with dancing verdure. But higher up all green life is nipped in the bud by the intense cold and biting winds. And yet there is a peculiar grandeur in this bleak barrenness.

Turning my eyes to the south I saw the ancient Mt. Meru. But before I could take it in, there appeared far away on the horizon the glory of Africa, the peerless Kilimanjaro. After I had taken in all I could with the naked eye I tried to draw it nearer to me with the aid of a pair of binoculars. Near to Kilimanjaro stood a smaller peak like a servant attending upon his master. The dazzling white snow encircling the lofty brow of Kilimanjaro crowns him king of the whole vast continent of Africa. From a distance the peak looks like an egg-shaped dome, giving no indication of the volcanic crater at the top.

Dr. Lecky had told us that the heat of the crater seemed to be gradually increasing, with the result that the snow inside it was melting. If this continued the volcano might erupt again one of these days.

"When do you think that would be?" I inquired.

"There is no saying. It may take 25 years or 400 years."

Geologists like Astronomers are never ungenerous with figures.

Circular Rainbow

As the plane proceeded, masses of white clouds gushed up on our left like steam from a bubbling cauldron. On our right the rays of the sun painted a perfect rainbow circle on the morning mist around and in the centre we could see the shadow of our moving plane !

Very soon the Indian Ocean became visible in the distance. My heart bowed to it in reverence, because its waves eternally caress the shores of my motherland.

As we lost height a little, the island of Mombasa came into view. The plane descended after circling round the town enabling us to have a full view of the town and its surroundings.

After a few minutes' rest and exchange of greetings with kindly friends, we boarded a small ten-seater. Half of the seats were occupied by our party. From Nairobi to Mombasa we had flown due east. From Mombasa to Tanga we flew due south. New and different scenery unfolded itself. On the left the wonderful colours of the sea, now deep blue, now sparkling green ! At some distance could be seen the island of Pemba. The light green of the water around it, the dark green of the tops of cocoanut trees and the ochre red of hill tops studding the islands presented a romantic picture. On the right could be seen the dancing, rippling line of the waves breaking against the shore.

As we proceeded further, the shining back-waters around Tanga were like the out-stretched arms of the sea. Finally, we sighted the square German-built city of Tanga, which we circled ceremoniously before alighting on solid ground.

At the airport we were received by Shri Adambhai Kareemji, accompanied by his little son, Latif. Our party had to be distributed between various hosts. Shri Appasahib and Kamalnayan stayed at Adambhai's place, while we shifted to the house of Manubhai Desai, a leading lawyer of Tanga.

Africans' Hopes

The first to visit us at Adambhai's were two young Africans who had a thorough knowledge of the conditions in their country and could discuss things with us with a depth of understanding. It was an interesting talk. India's selfless sympathy has awakened great hopes in the hearts of the Africans. They have begun to feel that they are no longer utterly friendless, that people of a neighbouring country have started taking brotherly interest in their lives. Our people, in Africa, therefore, should now treat Africans with greater love and respect. Ever since the Africans have heard of the plans for a Gandhi Memorial College in their country they have been eagerly awaiting its establishment. They know that it will be open to all the races living in Africa.

Public Functions

The first function in Tanga was a public meeting held at the Regal Cinema. No sooner had this meeting dispersed when the hall started filling up with women. The women's meeting was followed immediately by a performance of music and dancing arranged by the Arya Kanya Mandal. It was a great pleasure to see women of Gujarat and Maharashtra co-operating in creating an atmosphere of music. At night there was a dinner given by the Indian Association where some Europeans were also invited.

The next day we went with Shri Adambhai and

his charming wife, Zebunnisa, to see their tea gardens on the heights of the Usumbra mountains, about 60 or 70 miles from Tanga. Motoring through delightful mountain scenery, we reached the Botanical Gardens which were laid out by a former Government but are somewhat neglected these days. Here we found a single ripe mangosteen which we all shared. Some of our party had never tasted this fruit before. This delicious fruit of Eastern Asia is easily available in Calcutta but is rare in the rest of India.

Cultural Society

Wherever we went we noticed that Hindus and Muslims were very friendly with each other as individuals, but acute differences always arose when it was a question of running institutions, old or new. In Tanga I was asked to inaugurate an Indian Cultural Society. I also gave some hints for the drawing up of its constitution.

On the third morning, I went to see the war cemetery where many Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives in World War I were buried. Among the 400 to 600 people killed here in 1915, there were Rajputs, Maharashtrians from Gwalior, Hindu and Muslim soldiers from Jammu and Kashmir as well as some Madrasis. I naturally wanted to see the place where my countrymen had fought in defence of the African soil. There is a similar cemetery of Indian soldiers in Dar-es-Salaam also.

Before leaving Tanga, we visited the Karimji School. The Principal, Mr Perry, seemed to be an excellent educationist.

As our plane rose into the clear air, we saw the sea on one side and the Usumbra mountains on the other eternally greeting each other.

X

DAR-ES-SALAAM — THE ABODE OF PEACE

And now we were on our way to Dar-es-Salaam via Zanzibar. Once again our eyes were delighted by green enchantment. The sea studded with verdant islands, big and small, some of them lightly submerged in water. I thought they were so many emeralds worthy to be set in the rings of the beauty-loving celestials. Most of the larger islands had shining centres, orange and ochre tinted. Flying onward we came to a spot from where we saw the sea below us and land on both sides — to the left of us was the island of Zanzibar and to the right the Continent of Africa.

As we flew over the town of Zanzibar, we received a signal that there were no passengers below for the plane. There was no one in our plane wishing to go to Zanzibar either, so our pilot told us to see as much of Zanzibar as we could from the air. He dipped the right wing and we were able to get an excellent view of the thickly populated city of Zanzibar. Pleased with our satisfaction, our pilot straightened the plane and off we flew with the wind, towards Dar-es-Salaam.

Lovely Coast

Very soon the unforgettable sea coast of Dar-es-Salaam began to grow before our eyes. Crossing the town we landed at the other end and were taken in custody by our various hosts

Dar-es-Salaam is the capital of Tanganyika territory. Like the city of Tanga, it was built by the Germans. This sea-coast town has grown rapidly. One

of the European city fathers remarked, in the course of our conversation, that roads built for rickshaws had now become a nuisance. 'Who could have imagined then that huge motor-cars would be running night and day on the roads of Dar-es-Salaam!'

"But children's clothes are always cut with an eye to their rapid growth," I answered with a laugh.

Dar-es-Salaam, like Nairobi, became a home to us. We made it our headquarters from which we once went south, right up to Lindi. Again we made a trip from here to Zanzibar. Returning, we rested for a few days and again travelled by train to Morogoro and Dodoma. But the chief reason why we felt attached to this charming city was the very loving nature of our gracious hosts, who treated us as elders of the family. Even the little children of the house accepted us without a reserve.

Prayer Meetings

Our host, Shri Jayantibhai Shah, is a Theosophist. He and his family joined every day in our morning and evening prayers. The first morning, the prayer held on the terrace was enriched by the glorious sunrise we were privileged to witness. The sun rose a fresh glowing orb out of the eastern sea and showered its radiant benediction on our prayers. From the next day, however, the place had to be changed, as many more people began to join the prayers.

Towards the end of our stay, the managers of the Hindu temple of the city requested us to hold our prayers in the temple so that many more citizens could attend them. I sent them a message that "as we believed in the equal truth and sanctity of all religions, our prayers included verses from the Quran and prayers from the Bible and other scriptures of the

world. We know that Hinduism has never objected to differences of language or creed, but owing to the narrowness of feelings nowadays, some people may resent this kind of prayer. We can come to the temple only if the form of our prayers is acceptable to all of you."

"We have no objection whatsoever," they replied without the least hesitation. "All of us will gladly participate in your prayers." This breadth and generosity of outlook made me very happy.

The Agakhanis

Most of the Indian Muslims in East Africa are followers of His Highness the Aga Khan, and are known as the Ismailis. Those who are not Agakhanis are known as Ishnasheris. There are very few Mussalmans, if any, here whose home is in Pakistan. Almost all of them are from Cutch and Kathiawad. They speak Gujarati at home and in schools Gujarati is their medium of instruction. The manners and customs of the Agakhanis differ somewhat from those of other Muslims. They are followers of Hazrat Ali. The pilgrimage to Mecca is not obligatory on them. The Aga Khan is of Persian extraction. He has a world-wide reputation as a lover and connoisseur of horses, and his race-horses, so I have been told, are the finest in the world. The Aga Khan, besides being the spiritual head of the Ismailis, is recognized as a sound politician by the British and is a man of great influence which he never fails to use for the progress of his people. The Ismaili community, under the guidance of the Aga Khan, is the best organized community in East Africa.

A few years ago when the Aga Khan reached his 60th birthday, the Ismailis of East Africa celebrated

his diamond jubilee. They collected diamonds from all over the world and weighed them against the Aga Khan. The diamonds were returned to owners after their value in money had been offered to the Aga Khan as a birth-day gift' An expression of devotion quite unique' The Aga Khan made a trust of the greater part of this money. It is now used for the furtherance of many practical schemes for the betterment of his community. If a poor but able Khoja should need capital, he can borrow it from this trust without interest. The administration of such a huge trust is bound to rouse some criticism, but on the whole it has greatly helped the rapid progress of the Khoja community.

Practical Advice

The practical wisdom and farsightedness of the Aga Khan is proved by the advice he gives his people from time to time. As for example, when he told his people: "Do not crowd into Zanzibar. It has no future. You should now go and settle in Tanganyika, where there are great possibilities of future progress."

He also told his people. "Pay more attention to the education of your children. Teach them English. Learn English with zeal as if it were your mother tongue. Let the girls give up their Indian dress and adopt the Western style. And send as many of your children to England as you can for further studies."

Being Muslims their heart loyalty is towards Pakistan. Before the birth of Pakistan, they mixed freely with other Indians and took a leading part in the Indian associations here. Now they feel themselves different. I have heard that the Aga Khan has advised them not to concern themselves with the Hindustan-

Pakistan conflict. but to concentrate on their own progress.

Owing to the influence of the Arabs many of the natives of Africa accepted Islam long ago. It is said that the Aga Khan would like to organize the African Muslims as well as his own followers.

Bond of Language

The Ismailis speak Gujarati at home and being free from bigotry in their social life, they mix freely with the Gujarati Hindus. This friendliness is of great advantage to both parties. I advised them, therefore, to preserve at all costs the sweetness and unity derived from this common Gujarati language and not to allow themselves to be involved in the Hindi-Urdu-Hindustani controversy. "Foster your common Gujarati and learn Hindi or Urdu as you like. English, of course, you cannot do without. Do as much as you can for the education of your children and help the Africans in every possible way.

"Gandhiji teaches us that all religions are equally true and equally good. We should, therefore, cultivate equal reverence for Islam and Christianity and Hinduism. The main teachings of all religions are the same. All of them ask us to believe in God and to do good. All tell us to conquer our lower natures and cultivate humanity. We should, therefore, cultivate the spirit of brotherhood without any prejudices and irrespective of the differences of caste or creed. We should not hate people even when they start narrow, communal organizations. Sooner or later our catholicity and brotherliness are bound to affect all."

Some of the Christian missionaries have rendered yeoman service to the Africans. In fact it may be said that the political awakening of the Africans is, in a

large measure, due to them. That is why Englishmen in power regard the activities of the missionaries with a certain amount of suspicion and displeasure. Some go to the length of saying: "If it had not been for the missionaries, these Africans would never have prated of equality. Better to encourage Islam. At least it does not rouse the people against the existing authority." What an opinion to hold about Islam! How do the followers of Islam relish the compliment?

It was in Dar-es-Salaam that the Aga Khan was weighed against diamonds. There are many Ismailis in this town. They are well organized and money is liberally spent for the education of their children. There is an insistence on employing a few English teachers in order to maintain proper discipline in their schools.

Muslim Education

It must be repeated that in Agakhan schools, as well as in other schools, I heard the same complaints about the difficulty of securing and retaining good teachers. Parents do not realize that they themselves are responsible for this atmosphere since making money is their sole concern. Really good teachers can never thrive or education flourish in institutions which are controlled completely by people who are indifferent to real education. I heard much from both Indian as well as English teachers of how the interference of parents spoiled the educational atmosphere of schools.

In Mombasa there is a very big institution for Muslims—The Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education. Talking to an English instructor there, I happened to mention about some plan for making this into

a Muslim university for the whole of East Africa. He laughingly replied. "This will undoubtedly become a very large centre of education, but how can the word 'university' be applied to an institution limiting itself to the education of any one community? A university must surely be universal."

As time was short, I refrained from telling him that in India there was the Banaras Hindu University, the Aligarh Muslim University and the Jamia Millia Islamia, which were all organized on a communal basis, though students of other communities were also admitted to these institutions.

The Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education specializes in technical training. They are soon going to add a college for naval training. This college is bound to flourish since it has the advantages of an adequate sea-coast, good buildings, able instructors, wide lands and practically unlimited funds.

The Aga Khan has donated a very large sum for this institution and the Government of East Africa has promised to give a grant from the Colonial Development Fund on a pound-to-pound basis. When most of the Muslim educational institutions of East Africa are affiliated to this institution and it is fully developed, it will certainly become a very important centre of education.

The Real Need

In Dar-es-Salaam, speaking at various institutions and to several Indian leaders, I said emphatically. "I know that even our primary and secondary education in this country is not on a sound footing, nor have we secured teachers with a missionary zeal. Yet I insist that our real difficulty is the lack of higher education. Because of this lack the growth of our people is stunted.

It is impossible to get good teachers from India all the time. Imported rivers cannot fertilize this Sahara. Only higher education can supply us with good teachers and far-sighted leaders from amongst ourselves. Our institutions should never have a communal basis. Let us gather the best teachers from all over the world. Let us borrow the best educationists from the Government of India, and open a really good institution. It may make a modest start with a few students, but it is bound to grow. We shall make special provision for African students in this institution. I am sure that some, very few though they may be, European youths will also join, just because there will be provision here for Africans, Indians and Europeans to live and study together on a basis of equality.

"Sending our children to India or Europe for further studies is not going to solve the problems arising in this country. The establishment of a college here will give rise to and foster many subsidiary cultural and educational activities, as for instance, a course of lectures on Gandhiji and Tagore. Much could also be done for the development of the African languages by creating good literature in them. Language and literature constitute the spiritual food of a people. It is only by putting aside our self-interest and serving the Africans to the best of our ability that we can be acceptable to the people in this land "

Dar-es-Salaam is a gem of the Western coast of the Indian ocean. Here, as in Bombay, the sea forms a huge arc. There are so many convenient places for sea-bathing and the colours of the waters are so beautiful, varied and softly shining that it is difficult indeed to tear oneself away from this place. The Ocean Road runs along the sea. Where the arm of the arc

goes into the sea, our people have built a beautiful bungalow. Some Europeans are at present running it as a hotel and have aptly called it Ocean Breeze. It would be difficult to find a pleasanter place for a rest cure, with its beautiful beach and swaying cocoanut palms. Beautiful new houses are springing up everywhere.

Strategic Railway

The Belgians of Congo have chosen this town as their harbour town. Their land lies on the western side of Central Africa, but they possess only a negligible stretch of sea-coast on the western side. To the east of Belgian Congo lies the long, narrow Lake Tanganyika. Between Kigoma (a harbour situated on the eastern coast of this lake) and Dar-es-Salaam runs a railway of 780 miles. This railway line divides the whole of Tanganyika territory into two parts—the northern and the southern. The strategic importance of this railway is very great. It is the only convenient route by which Ruanda Urundi or the town of Usumbra can be reached from the east.

Schools for Africans

In Dar-es-Salaam we visited two institutions run by the Government for the education of African children. The boys' school is run strictly and efficiently. In the course of conversation, the English principal said. "Boys who can get married at 14 must surely learn to think of their careers at that age and study diligently. They will never be able to get on in life or develop their latent abilities if they are treated indulgently. They should be taught with the most loving patience, but their indolence should never be put up with." His theory seemed to be justified by the results

as his pupils were found to be working hard and with enthusiasm.

We reached the girls' school during the play interval. Some girls were having their lunch while others were playing in the open. It was specially interesting to see their thick, curly hair with fine, razor-shaved partings. So numerous and varied are the ways of dressing the hair in different parts of this country that all of them photographed and collected would make a very interesting album. It is said that when an African marries a non-African, the colour of the skin changes but the peculiarity in the hair persists. This may well be one of those theories which do not need to be proved in order to be believed !

The Government has also opened several welfare centres for the Africans where they gather freely, play games, conduct night classes and even drink if they so choose.

The Drink Habit

Drinking is very common in the whole of East Africa, and Indians have not lagged behind. It was somewhat disturbing to see sometimes a respectable person getting "merry" after a "sun-downer". I was told that some people were noble exceptions and did not drink. But I never had the courage to go further into the matter. Thinking discretion to be the better part of curiosity, I took it for granted that those whom we met were no doubt amongst the exceptions.

Drinks were always provided for the European guests at dinners given in our honour. And the Indians also helped themselves to it according to their inclinations. Drinking is the usual thing in this country, and yet some people wrote to me to ask how I could "put

up with all this " I contented myself by replying that " I had not come to this country to judge and condemn a custom universally accepted. I had come to study, to understand and to befriend. Had I come here on a mission of prohibition, my attitude would have been entirely different." The problem is very much more acute in Uganda

African Music

In one of the African welfare centres, where a gramophone was playing, I asked for some African music. I had heard very good music of the kind taught by the missionaries—African songs set to European tunes. Negro Spirituals also I had heard. What I wanted was authentic and unmixed African music with African tunes. Only one such record was available and even there the influence of Arabic music was clearly discernible.

The heart and soul of a race can be found in its music. That is why I was eager to hear the music of the Africans and seized every opportunity I could of hearing it. I asked people whether the Africans had any warlike or aggressive music. I was told that warlike music was not to be found, but there was varied music for celebrations, like marriages and also some songs of victory. From the very little that I had heard, my impression was that cadences of sorrow and sadness preponderated in African music. This impression was confirmed after hearing the records of African music which our host, Shri Jayantibhai, specially brought over for me. But I had not sufficient experience to come to definite conclusions. People who really understand music should make a deep study of African music.

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There is a small but very important museum in Dar-es-Salaam. The curator of this museum has made a special study of various poisons used for arrows by the Africans when they go hunting. There was a good collection here of such arrows also.

In this museum we also saw a copy of a cave-painting which is said to have been painted 40,000 years ago. The living and realistic delineation of the animals and the hunting scenes were specially worth noting.

African civilization has been entirely rural so far. From one end of the country to the other, one sees only huts. The ancient Africans did not put up a single stone or brick-and-mortar building. After seeing five museums we were able to have a fair idea of their clothes made out of the barks of trees, their boats carved from tree trunks, their ornaments made of beads and sea-shells, and their musical instruments made of wood and leather.

Interest in Gandhiji

One day we were invited by the African Association. We received a very warm welcome there. They were deeply interested in Gandhiji and his way of life and asked us many questions. I was also asked by several Africans. "How were you in India able to gain your freedom without shedding blood? Teach us the art." The Government had not imposed any conditions on us while giving us a permit to visit East Africa. For that very reason I was particularly careful in my speeches. I did not want in any way to arouse the Africans against their Government. So I told them of Gandhiji's constructive activities and the important part they play in developing the character and strength of a nation.

I feel that this country will need the Europeans for some time to come. If only the English would understand the future and behave wisely towards the Africans and the Indians here, they would not only save themselves but also contribute substantially towards the harmonious developinent of humanity. I fear, however, that as yet, the whites show no signs of such farsightedness. All they seem to be concerned with today is how to squeeze out the Indians and to dominate the Africans

I feel that such a state of affairs cannot last long. I hope that the leaders of the Commonwealth will advise the people here and prevail on them to revise and liberalize their policy.

I cannot help feeling that photography has done a great deal of harm to the visual arts. For example, a few good photographic representations of the various African types would suffice to give one a fairly accurate idea of what the African looks like. But the special facial and physical characteristics of his race as delineated by an African sculptor would be quite different from anything depicted in mere photographs. Because such a statue would portray not only the physical appearance of the African, but also his mental and racial characteristics developed through the many centuries of experience. That is why I sought such images wherever I went — in the museums of Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, Zanzibar, Dodoma and Kampala. I also examined with special interest the finest examples of local art which adorned the houses of the Sultan of Zanzibar and the English Resident there, the Governor of Dar-es-Salaam, the Kabaka of Uganda, and other notables. The King's College, Budo, the Macarere

College, the Mission School of Gayaza, etc., contained very good and most interesting examples of ancient and modern paintings.

I was able to procure a few good examples of African statuary from an itinerant vendor in Dar-es-Salaam. These statues carved out of white or red wood depict African life perfectly. The ears, the eyes, the lips and the chins bear the unmistakable stamp of their racial character. The Western custom of having dumb wooden waiters in their drawing rooms in the likeness of Africans has always been extremely distasteful to me. It is not the sole or eternal destiny of the African to do menial service in the houses of the wealthy whites. It would be in much better taste, I always think, to have dumb statues of waiters in the likeness of their own race if they must have them at all.

XI

NEO-HINDUISM

A young man wanting to join Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati said that he did not believe in God, and as such, had no use for prayers.

"An Ashram is an association of those who have faith in community prayers." This is how Mahatma Gandhi defined an Ashram for the benefit of the young man. Followers of any religion can take part in Ashram-prayers. No set form of prayer is enjoined. It is enough even if you sit silent in a prayerful mood. We accept all the great religions as equally true, and accept them as our own, have no hesitation in reciting the prayers of various religions. Theosophy, too, has emphasized the need of studying the teachings of all

religions. Theosophists, therefore, in various parts of East Africa were keen in joining our prayers.

I give here a gist of what I said at our prayer-meetings, but not without hesitation. I know that travel-books should avoid being preachy. I would request readers, therefore, to drop this chapter if they are not interested in such kind of stuff.

Orthodoxy and Caste

Most of our people in East Africa being men of business have no time for study. They cannot mix with the Europeans. Neither do they invite Africans to their social functions. The result is that they retain even in Africa the social atmosphere of orthodox India with all its caste-groups and separatist prejudices. The only relieving feature is that they always welcome religious preachers from India and keep themselves in touch with social and religious progress in the Mother country. But sometimes these preachers carry religious and social prejudices from India and inject them here. Some preachers maintain a high level no doubt. But even they sometimes fail to realize the importance of multi-racial co-operation and the vital necessity of fostering human brotherhood in the practical, day-to-day life of our people in Africa.

Mine was a humble attempt, therefore, to explain the sociological and cultural need of the situation and the duty of our people who have settled there.

Efficacy of Prayer

I am a firm believer in prayer, both individual and private prayer, as well as the collective or community prayer. Prayer is to the heart what a daily bath is to the body. Looked at from another angle, prayer can be said to be food for the soul, more essential than the daily bread. In a community prayer we

can, if we are earnest, support each other and gradually build a community soul. Daily prayer helps us in our endeavour.

Prayer need not always be a supplication, it is enough if we feel the purifying presence of the Maker of our being, the Lord of all. People organize dinners and recreations to develop friendliness and other social virtues. They should try, if they have the enthusiasm, to organize community prayers to achieve the same result on a higher plane. People labouring under a sense of frustration, disintegration and defeat have been known to have overcome the bankruptcy of the heart and character by holding fast to prayer with faith and humility. Prayer is our last treasure when everything else is lost. I have, therefore, likened prayer to the life-belt which is the only hope for a man who is shipwrecked and in imminent danger of being drowned.

A common prayer should be an important function in each family, either in the morning or in the evening, where all the members, young and old, men and women, gather together and feel their oneness with each other and with God. It would be an asset to the family if family affairs are then discussed in the presence of all in the purified atmosphere of prayer.

People of all communities should similarly gather at least once a month to pray together. This will help them to realize the community soul or what we may call the over-soul.

Use of Temples

The temple is called 'a house of God'. It seems we have taken the phrase too literally. With us the temple has come to be a place where God lives as a medieval Lord, waking up early in the morning to

the sound of music and panegyrics of the devotees, having His bath in a ceremonial way, taking His sumptuous lunch and dinner at appropriate hours, enjoying His siesta in right royal tropical fashion, and giving audience to His devotees when it suits His pleasure.

These medieval ideas and ideologies must change. The ever pure and satisfied Lord needs no bath and food. Cooked food in temples gives rise to caste-ism, which amounts to a negation of religion. The best thing would be to offer fresh or dry fruits at the temple and then distribute them amongst the devotees, especially children.

There should be no priests. You cannot express your *bhakti* or devotion to the Lord by proxy.

As a child it was my habit and joy to touch my parents' feet every morning as a mark of honour and filial duty. Could I, with propriety appoint a servant to do that duty on my behalf, because when I grew old I was too busy to continue the practice? My parents did not need such a service. It was a matter of satisfaction to me. How can I derive it by proxy? You cannot serve God through priests.

Centre of Culture

A temple is a place of purity. The floors and banisters of temples should be scrubbed and cleaned many times a day. It should provide facilities for people to learn the principles of personal as well as social hygiene. The place should not be made dirty and muddy or sticky by throwing water or flowers all around. The atmosphere of a temple should not be disturbed by loud chanting. We must have consideration for those who sit in meditation. All those who have no objection to images should be allowed to

enter a temple, whatever their religion. Connected with the temple there should be a good library of religious and devotional books and healthy general literature. A good temple can have its own publication department. There should be a guest-house for travellers and a hospital for both men and cattle. A temple thus can be transformed into an up-to-date institution of service and a centre of culture.

Purifying Religion

We call our religion *sanatan* which means eternal. A thing that is *sanatan* (eternal) must of necessity be *nutya-nutan* (ever new, ever fresh). Air and water remain fresh only so long as they are allowed to flow freely. The eternal principles of all religions are the same. They cannot vary; but the forms and expressions must vary according to time, place and necessity. We have allowed our religion to be smothered by dead custom and lifeless ritual.

It is our tendency also to find cheap substitutes for every religious duty. Thus we are content with practising a little charity when renunciation is expected or indicated. Instead of preaching devotion to truth for its own sake we threaten people with dire consequences if they do not keep their word and we tempt them with innumerable benefits if they cling to truth. The result is that instead of being loyal to truth, people learn to submit to the promptings of tendencies that are fast developing in the world.

In fact, we should study all religions and accept them as our own. Conflicts between religious groups can never be removed by discussion and comparisons. Only by the acceptance of all religions will true religiousness develop. Each religion has gathered much dross through the ages. Only when we concentrate on

the high ideals of all the religions will the dross subside.

Ideas of high and low are inimical to true religious feeling. The sense of high and low should go, not only between the castes of Hinduism, but also from amongst the races of mankind. No one is a foreigner, no one is a stranger.

Uplift of All

We must revise our old taboos about inter-dining and inter-marriage. Where all religions are accepted as equally true, or equally our own, there remains no need for conversion from one religion to another. Neither should there be any resentment if somebody goes over to another fold.

Our goal should be Sarvodaya, uplift of all. And here we must begin with the most backward. It would be a denial of the ideal of Sarvodaya if some were to benefit at the expense of others. Exploitation and assertion of racial superiority cannot bring about peace or universal brotherhood. Separatism is a curse leading to social disruption. Self-purification is both an individual and a social duty. Mankind has learnt through two world wars that society cannot be sustained without non-violence and truth, i.e. justice and love.

XII

GROUNDNUTS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

June 6 saw us on our way by air to the far south — Lindi Harbour and Nachingwe where the world famous scheme of growing groundnut is being tried out. There is a good road running along the sea-coast to Lindi, but it takes too long to go by car. We flew first over land and then over sea, revelling in the delicate suggestion of rose-coloured water, and the bright emerald of the islands of Mafia, Songo-Songo and others. On the right we saw Kisuju.

Later we had the joy of following with our eager eyes the countless lovely curves of the Rufiji river. After that we saw two or three small streams running to meet the sea. We also saw the two ancient (and now neglected) harbours of Kilva-Kivinje and Kilva-Kisivani. In olden days there was a road running from the latter to lake Nyasa. Both these harbours had a long chequered history during the Arab and Portuguese days.

We arrived at Lindi aerodrome, 14 miles from the harbour-city of Lindi, which lies ten degrees to the south of the Equator. It is a very quiet harbour. The tiny river Lukelady widens here to pour itself into the sea.

Arab Influence

The same evening there was a meeting of Asians, which was attended by many Arabs as well as by Hindus and Muslims of the town. The association of Arabs with Africa is as old as our own, and from the beginning it has been very friendly. The Arabs had

established several kingdoms along the coast, great and small. There have often been fights between them and the Portuguese for land, with the result that remains of both civilizations are found all along the coast. The Portuguese have lost much and yet they still own the beautiful and fertile country of Mozambique, as also that of Angola on the west side of Africa. The glory of the Arabs has departed but vestiges of their culture still remain.

We crossed the Lukelady to reach the hill of Kitunda. It was already dark. As we went up the hill, the headlights of our car fell on a leopard. In a trice it had disappeared into the woods, but we caught a clear glimpse of the spots as well as the beautiful curve of its tail. Passing the sisal fields we reached the luxurious bungalow of our host, Shri Meghji bhai Shah. Although tired some of us were tempted to go up to the terrace to do a bit of star-gazing! Had we not reached so far as 10 degrees to the south of the Equator! But unkind clouds soon drove us to bed.

In the morning we found Lukelady peacefully asleep. Even the hillocks around her slumbered. At last the sun rose and sent forth his gentle rays to awaken them. The waters of the Lukelady shone with the joy of this awakening. The hills brightened and invited us to sally forth in their direction.

Groundnut Harbour

Starting at 8 a.m., we drove 28 miles through many sisal fields. We saw a tiny harbour built specially to convey stores for the groundnut scheme. A new railway is being built here and petroleum is pumped up from this place in huge pipes for miles to Nachingwe, the scene of the groundnut plantation. The efficiency with which Europeans bring modern

scientific apparatus to the densest of jungles is really as amazing as it is admirable. Indians are co-operating efficiently in all these schemes. I heard Indians praised for their intelligent and loyal co-operation

We returned to Lindi to lunch with the Provincial Commissioner, Mr Pyke, who had gone to some trouble to have a purely vegetarian meal prepared for us. During the whole of our stay in East Africa, this was the only time when we were invited by an Englishman to his place for a meal, though everywhere many Europeans freely attended the numerous functions organized for us by our people. Mr Pyke is a gentleman of liberal views and broad outlook.

At night our host, 'Shri Meghji bhai, and his daughter Hansa gave a large dinner party at Kitunda which was well attended by Europeans also.

Meeting Oil Shortage

At the end of the World War II alert Englishmen keenly aware of world conditions realized that all countries would soon be faced with a shortage of vegetable oils. They took upon themselves the task of meeting the shortage by producing groundnuts wherever possible and presented to their country many elaborate schemes. In spite of economic ravages of the war, Britain took up the work with Parliament's sanction. Money was spent like water. Time was of the essence. Instead of the usual prolonged examination of the land to be brought under cultivation an aerial survey was made and work was started before the scheme had been properly studied by financial experts. Huge tractors and bulldozers went into action to clear the jungle and level the ground. Factories began to operate and to produce groundnut

and sunflower oil. It appeared as if preparations were being made for a war.

When work had proceeded a good deal it was discovered that while there had been unlimited expenditure, there was nothing to show on the side of income. An inquiry followed. No proper accounts were available. Steel chains used to fell trees were supplied secondhand. They gave way. Suggestions were made for the abandonment of the whole project. But the doggedness of the British would own no defeat either in industry or in war. The scheme has now been modified and placed on a sound footing.*

Training for Africans

We visited the site of the project to see how work was going on. We left on June 8 and travelling 93 miles through Lindi reached Nachingwe where we saw the great scheme in action. On the way we had to change at Mingoyo and Matama. A petrol pipe ran parallel to the track. Army tanks had been converted into tractors. Huge bulldozers were levelling the ground. Two tractors were used at a time with a steel chain between them. With the help of the chain nearly a dozen big trees could be felled in a single operation.

I was amazed to see what tremendous things machine can do. At the same moment the idea came to me that the bulldozers and tractors were being driven by Africans working under white supervision. People who were doing this gigantic work could not help developing their intelligence. With their ability their ambition must also grow. So far, the Africans in association with Indians have learnt simple crafts like

* The scheme was finally abandoned.

carpentry and tailoring. Some can also keep accounts in commercial establishments. They have learnt a little of modernism as traders. Now that they were taking part in the huge groundnut scheme, they would certainly begin to think of starting all kinds of factories. Once they became conscious of their capacity no government or race could keep them down.

Talk with Officials

We met the top officials concerned with the scheme. They showed us elaborate blueprints and then took us round. One of them told us, "Before starting a scheme of this nature one should make sure of the supply of water. Even if half the capital were spent on such a survey and on providing an adequate water supply, it would be justified. Good knowledge of geology is also necessary in farming on such a large scale."

He showed us a couple of maps and explained that the soil there was not the same as that in India or Europe. This soil had been created by volcanic activity and agriculture as known in India was not possible there. After hearing all kinds of details, I was convinced that even such huge projects could successfully be run through decentralization with advantage.

After going over the place we had lunch there and had a useful talk with Indians who had been attracted there by the possibility of trade. The area also abounds in cashewnut trees. I do not know if oil can be extracted from cashewnuts, although the outer cover of the nut does yield oil. I have been partial to cashewnuts from childhood. They were found in plenty on the west coast of India. The plant, it

appears, was imported into India from Africa. The Portuguese, it is said, brought it to India

Indians' Enterprise

We saw the beauty of the sunset on our way back from Nachingwe. The sight was so refreshing that I was no longer tired and on returning home was able to go up to the roof to point out various stars to Shrimati Nalini Pant. Shri Tatya Inamdar also joined us in our study of the stars

Next morning we left Kitunda. We visited Shri Meghjubhai's two sisal factories nearby. The machinery in one is old-fashioned, but brand-new and up-to-date in the other. The sisal trade was started by Europeans to begin with. They did not succeed in it and gradually the trade fell into Indian hands.

The same thing happened in the case of the Uganda Transport Company. The whites who took a contract to run it lost, I was told, about 75,000 shillings in the very first year. The Agakhanis ultimately took over the work. The loss was cut down from 75,000 to 3,000 shillings in the first year. Now they make, it seems, a profit of 20 to 25 per cent. Where a community develops organizing ability it cannot be easily beaten in straight competition. If the ruling race resorts to highhandedness and unjust legal measures to put down such people, its mentality is soon perverted and in time it begins to degenerate.

XIII

IN LINDI AND ZANZIBAR

Before leaving Lindi for Dar-es-Salaam, we had a number of things to do. The Muslims of Lindi wanted to renovate a couple of mosques. They took Appasahib and me there. Appasahib belongs to everybody and is sympathetic towards all classes. He does not disappoint anyone either. He agreed to help in whatever way he could and asked them to carry on the work of renovation.

The Government Indian School at Lindi is managed by the people of the town. Since both Hindus and Muslims are in the management, disputes had already begun. I shall not go into the details of the dispute, but should like to mention some of my conclusions. Muslims keep quiet and contented as long as they are not awakened. They let things drift. Hindus praise them. "How good these people are," they say. "There is no question of any differences or disputes."

Communal Outlook

In such conditions Hindus have no intention of showing any hostility towards Muslims, but they have little respect for their way of thinking or living. As soon as Muslims are awakened, they begin to resent the Hindu attitude. But instead of removing their disabilities through co-operation in public work, they bring in communalism and demand rights as Muslims. "Why should a majority of teachers be Hindus? Why not have more Muslim teachers?" When Muslims raise such a demand, the Hindus reply: "How can

you thrust upon us teachers who may be neither able nor cultured ? How can we allow our children's education to be spoiled ? "

Both Hindu and Muslim representatives on a managing committee never sit down to judge the ability of teachers impartially. The Hindus do not realize that they should allow teachers to gain experience. Muslims in their turn do not understand that quality of education does go down if indifferent teachers are employed. There would be no dispute if managers were to trust each other and pay equal attention to the education of children of both communities. In the clash of communal interests they lose sight of what is good for the children or the community and begin to show suicidal tendencies.

This blind selfishness becomes dangerous if the appointment of someone's relation is involved. Wherever teachers of one community are in a majority the other community begins to demand that teachers should be appointed on the basis of population, of the number of students or of the financial help given by each community. If there are any Parsi or Christian teachers, each community tries to win them on its side. This also can lead to disputes and quarrels.

. . . Need of Realism

No community can serve its own interests by thinking of themselves alone. They only feed their pride, but spoil public life. The result is that leaders begin to declare that democracy does not suit us. If teachers of my community are in a majority, I would certainly say that "all teachers should be appointed on merit. Percentages cannot help." If teachers of my community are in a minority, I would say: "I

have no objection personally, but if you do not raise their numbers you would lose the confidence of my community I would not then be able to pacify my community Considering the circumstances we should be realistic enough and go by a system of proportions "

Even if this is accepted what would be the basis for distribution of jobs? Would it be population, number of students or the extent of financial help given by each community? This question alone would raise many troubles

Question of Ratio

In a hospital in Noakhali (in India), I saw people insisting on communal ratio even in the admission of patients. Some patients of one community whose condition was serious were thrown out and their beds given to nominally sick patients of another community. The official in charge expressed helplessness, saying that there was no way to convince communalists of their folly

In one place in India the question of proportion among prisoners in jail was also raised ' But I shall not go into such mad details.

Shri Kamalnayan suggested that friction might be avoided if Hindu members of managing committees were elected by Muslims and Muslim members by Hindus. Why should they not try this system? The local people's immediate reply was: "Then we shall have only useless people." The inherent weakness of both communities is expressed in that remark. Thus when nothing helps, one school is divided into two. Expenditure is doubled. Separate applications for grants are made to an alien Government, and then having lost all self-respect one has to put up with

criticism from them. What Government would not exploit such a situation !

Living cordially and in close friendship is to each community's best advantage even if it means a little sacrifice. Each community should have an attitude of generosity towards the other. If both were convinced of this simple truth, the whole problem would disappear.

Sand Islands

We talked to the people until after midday and reached Dar-es-Salaam by 1-30 p.m. From the plane on the way we again saw the changing colours of the ocean, and pretty islands of all sizes. I began to wonder how many unborn islands must be trying to raise their heads above the water and how many of these must be old islands being gradually submerged under water worn out by the constant beating of waves over the centuries.

Little islands of sand which appear on the banks of the Ganga or the Brahmaputra are called *chars* in Bengali. I am sure the *chars* of the ocean must be longer lived than the *chars* of the river. The ocean had a splash of pink and the shadow of racing clouds on it provided a lovely combination of light and shade in the waters.

"Zanzibar has been the mother of African culture. She is now becoming old and has lost her strength. But it would not be fair to deny her the credit and appreciation which her culture deserves," said Appasahib to us. There are very ancient links between India and Zanzibar. It is a well-known historical fact that trade relations between India and Zanzibar existed long before Vasco de Gama came to India.

Somewhere about the year 1832, the Sultan of Muscat came with a few Kutchi Bhatias and settled in Zanzibar. The same dynasty has continued to rule since then. The kingdom of Zanzibar once extended far into East Africa. Now the whole of it is under British rule. Even the Sultan of Zanzibar is sovereign only in name, real power having long since passed into the hands of the British Resident.

Cloves and Slaves

Zanzibar is today famous for its production of and trade in cloves. At one time it used to be the centre of slave trade. Slaves were collected from all over Africa and kept here in the most wretched conditions. Some of them died of ill treatment and neglect ; some managed to run away, and the rest were sold in the slave markets. Remnants of the slave trade persisted until quite recently. The British claim that had they not sternly put a stop to the slave trade, certain of the African communities would have become extinct

Only 46 miles of sea separates Dar-es-Salaam from Zanzibar. From the plane the coast of Zanzibar is visible even before Dar-es-Salaam disappears from sight. It is not worthwhile to unbuckle the safety belts for before we have settled down in our places, it is time to put them on again to descend at Zanzibar.

At Zanzibar Shri Appasahub and his wife, Nalini, stayed with their old friends, the Sidhwas. The rest of us stayed with Shri Chhaganbhai. It is amazing how Indian women manage to look after half-a-dozen guests at a time and make them all comfortable. Even little children get this training from childhood and the tradition of hospitality is carried on from generation to generation.

Crowded Town

Zanzibar is a world in itself. The main part of the town is like any densely-populated old town of Kathiawad (Saurashtra). It is impossible for modern cars to pass through its narrow and crooked lanes. At some places a way has been made for very small cars to pass, by cutting off corners from the walls of various houses.

We paid courtesy visits to the Sultan and the Resident. The talk at both places was mostly formal. The Sultan is a cultured, middle-aged gentleman, who picked up a little Hindustani in his youth. There were some rare and beautiful articles of indigenous art in his palace and also some historical paintings. The Sultana was dressed in European clothes. Somehow I feel that Oriental style of dress brings out feminine beauty far more effectively than does the Occidental.

The question of education was discussed with the Resident. A beautiful view of the sea could be had from his bungalow.

Our programme in Zanzibar, although overcrowded, was enjoyable. One day we went to see a factory where oil is extracted from cloves. There we saw that the cloves we eat are in reality little red buds of the clove tree. After the buds are broken off, the stalks are collected and boiled and oil is extracted from them. The husk is then used for fuel.

XIV

THE SIGHTS OF ZANZIBAR

Arab influence is most apparent in Zanzibar. When the Persians first came here is not known, but those who are known as Shirazis today have become just like the Africans. They speak Swahili. I gathered the impression that though their ways and manners are exactly like those of the original Africans, they are not completely assimilated.

But the Arabs are quite different. Like Indians, they trade here. Some among them are artisans. Others have received English education and follow the professions of the upper middle classes. Their past grandeur is lost and newer ambitions have not yet arisen — at least so it seemed to me. The Arabs can *easily mix with Indians as Asians*.

We were able to meet some Arabs^{*} here. They seemed to be very pleased to hear of Gandhiji's constructive activities and about his belief in the equal sanctity of all religions. Only if we learn from the West the lessons of science, social service and organization, and reject its political ideals — its cult of power and self-indulgence — can we create the right atmosphere for peace and render real service to humanity.

Water Supply

There is no dearth of good water in the town of Zanzibar. Not far from the town itself, there is so much water near the surface of the earth that if a little pit is dug, water starts flowing. Various tiny

springs are tapped and collected in a place called Chem-Chem. From here the water is pumped into the whole town. Ships coming to Zanzibar are also supplied with fresh water from these reservoirs. Where does all this water come from ?

The most likely explanation, of course, is that owing to heavy rainfall the earth collects the water beneath its crust. But how can such a matter-of-fact explanation satisfy the imaginative mind ? It is said that the waters from the crater of the great Kilimanjaro travelling under earth and ocean for 250 miles gush forth here ! The water is so delicious that one likes to imagine that it has indeed come from the Kilimanjaro.

Coconut trees abound in Zanzibar and the water of the tender coconut is very much in demand. The green coconut is known here as *madaku*. There is a superstition among the hospitable people here that whoever tastes the water of the *madaku* once, must return to Zanzibar to drink it once again. Zanzibar is so beautiful and the people so pleasant and hospitable that one would not be sorry if this were true.

The Bhatias

The Sultan of Muscat had such faith in the loyalty and ability of our Bhatias who came here with him that he entrusted them with the affairs of State. For fear of not being able to observe their religious practices and social customs, the Bhatias would not bring out their families from India. The Sultan assured them earnestly that he would give them all facilities for their religious observances, even promising to provide silver pipes for water (silver and gold are supposed to be pure metals). But the pious Indians could not bring themselves to agree to the Sultan !

When the British acquired power here, they treated the Bhatias for some time as the leaders of the Hindu community. But now in this democratic age all Hindus have combined to establish the Hindu Association. The Bhatias naturally are not quite happy about it.

While even the organization of the Hindu community alone is thus so difficult, the spirit of the age commands that we should organize not only the Hindus but all Indians, and here in Africa, it goes a step further and demands the organization of all Asians. We Indians are, therefore, behindhand two revolutions compared to the requirements of the age.

There are many and different tribes in Africa without any political unity. But the one common name — African — is bringing them together gradually. In Europe, too, though some countries do fight among themselves, the people are known as Europeans because of their having a common culture and a particular outlook. The only word which can be used for us is Asians.

In future we should organize as Asians. Under the title of Asian we should welcome and organize not only people from India, Pakistan and Goa, but also the people of Arabia, Ceylon, Burma, China, Japan etc.

Maternity Hospital

In Zanzibar we saw the building of an African Welfare Centre. How many people make use of it, I cannot say. There is a clinic there, too, but it is not working as no doctor can be found for the place. Indian doctors do not offer themselves because they are paid less and are given a lower position as compared to European doctors.

Nearby, however, we saw a very good maternity

hospital. A European nurse has devoted her lifetime to this hospital and now at 64 is still working with unabated enthusiasm. She is greatly loved by the people and her services are highly appreciated. This hospital was built by some Muslims and is carried on by the combined charity of all Indians. This example of co-operation made us very happy

Both in Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar I was greatly troubled by a crack in my dental plate. It went on widening until both eating and speaking became an agony. This placed me absolutely *hors de combat*, as speaking and eating seemed to be our main job in East Africa, apart from sight-seeing. Fortunately an English dentist was good enough to repair it for me. In spite of the fact that he was on a holiday, he did it willingly and within a few hours.

After this experience I was convinced of the wisdom of Gandhiji's advice that a man should always carry with him a spare dental plate and an extra pair of glasses.

Cave of Slaves

The 52 miles long and 24 miles wide island of Zanzibar may well be called a museum of natural beauty. One day we went to the beautiful beach of Phumba where we saw some of the biggest sea-shells of all kinds.

There is a cave in Zanzibar, where slaves were chained and kept before they were sold or sent away to other countries. The slaves were just herded together and only the strong and hardy ones survived. The traders calmly increased the price of the remaining slaves and thus made sure that they did not lose

because some of the poor wretches had not the stamina to survive !

The museum in Zanzibar is housed in two buildings. The founder must have taken great pains over it. The history of the work and discoveries of missionaries like Livingstone can be found here. There is very good material here for the study of human life, the animal world and ocean life. But no particular effort seems to have been made to keep the museum up-to-date. Today these museums are really 'mummies' of museums. There are many such 'mummies' in India, too.

Ancient Palace

The nearby island of Pemba is just a suburb of Zanzibar. The glory of Zanzibar consists in its many beautiful beaches, the various *shambas* (orchards) belonging to people of different races and the clove trees spreading their aromatic fragrance over the whole island.

One evening we went to the sea-shore to see the ruins of the ancient Mruby palace. There is a grandeur about old ruins, guarded by grand old trees. The old world atmosphere of the place was reflected in the still twilit waters from which the rosy sunset glow was just fading. Darkness fell as we finished our evening prayers.

It is difficult indeed to say farewell to kind friends and hosts who have made it possible for one to get the very best in a short time. How one wishes it were possible to correspond with each one of them ! So many times the memory of one or the other flashes like lightning through one's mind and one wonders whether they also think of us some time in the same way.

XV

IN TANGANYIKA TERRITORY

The whole of Zanzibar seemed to have collected at the airport to see us off. So many kindly faces! They had done so much to make us happy! It was frustrating not to be able to talk to everybody.

Our party occupied all the seats in the plane. So we were perfectly at home in mid-air. But before we could draw each other's attention to the beautiful sights we flew over, the short journey was over and we were home again at Jayantibhai's house. After two more crowded days at Dar-es-Salaam, we bade farewell once more to our kind hosts on the evening of June 15. We were now going into the heart of the Tanganyika country. From Dar-es-Salaam to Morogoro and from there to Dodoma we travelled due west by train. Then by car we went due north to see the extinct crater of Ngorongoro. From there again we saw the grand mountains of Meru and Kilimanjaro near Moshi and Arusha, spent a night in the National Park at Amboseli seeing the wild animals; and returned to Nairobi very happy and rich with exciting experience.

Mica Hills

Shri D. K. Patel and our Trade Commissioner, Shri S. Patel, accompanied us from Dar-es-Salaam. The country we passed through was entirely different. Enjoying the hilly scenery, we reached Morogoro at 6-30 in the morning, to be received by our host, Shri Shivabhai Patel.

The hills around Morogoro are full of mica. An English lady — Mrs Willis — runs a hotel at a most

beautiful spot on the top of a hill, the source of the Morogoro river. A glorious view can be had from here of the green valleys and the plains beyond.

We made a trip to Magole, 32 miles from Morogoro, where we were delighted to see that a number of enterprising Gujaratis, instead of following the beaten path of trade and shop-keeping, had settled down to try an experiment in co-operative farming. There are 32 farms of 500 acres each. The farmers are settled here with their families and are running the farms with great efficiency. The mutual understanding which will be established through this life between the Africans and the Indians is sure to be advantageous to both. Shri Jethabhai explained to us very forcefully and with some rhetoric the difficulties this community had because of the policy of the Government, and spoke of the ways in which Indian cotton merchants and the Indian Government could help them. Jethabhai has seen many ups and downs in life; he has, therefore, a sure grasp of life and its conditions.

Just before leaving Morogoro, we had tea at Dr. Mhaskar's place. Whenever I meet a reliable doctor, I usually like to know from him about the country and its people, about the more prevalent diseases and the vitality of the common people. Though sometimes painful, it is very important data for a student of sociology. Naturally, no individuals are ever mentioned in such talks. A doctor is bound to respect the confidence of his patients.

On the evening of June 17 we left Morogoro. The hills accompanied us for quite a while before saying farewell. Orion and the moon watched over us, jumping all the while from peak to peak.

Dodoma

Our train reached Dodoma at the unearthly hour of 3-30 a.m. It being a most inconvenient time for guests as well as hosts, it was arranged that our carriage would be detached from the train and left at Dodoma. We were able to get ready at leisure before Shri Dara Keeka, his cultured wife, Sheharabanu, and our other hosts came to receive us at the station at 7 a.m. Some of us stayed at Shri Keeka's place, and the rest of us were lodged in the comfortable railway hotel.

Both in India and in Africa, the Parsi community, though, very small, stands out on account of its ability, its benevolence and its cosmopolitan attitude. This is not due merely to wisdom and foresight of the merchant, but also to a very genuine innate humanity. A Parsi may be living in a village and even owning a profitable wine shop, but if anyone around is in trouble, he will be the first to feel the sorrow and rush to the aid of his unfortunate neighbour

Use of Money

Some people earn money just to add to their riches and to store it up like misers. Others earn only to squander away their money on fleeting pleasures and unbecoming indulgences and luxuries. Some earn in order to help their families and, perhaps the people of their own communities. Those who are ready to give help freely wherever it is needed, regardless of race, religion and country, are very rare indeed. The Parsis believe in living a life of decent comfort. Charities for their own community are generously subscribed to and very well organized. But they do not stop there. In their charities, people of other castes, creeds and countries are not forgotten. It is for this reason that

Mahatma Gandhi often referred to them as "the philanthropic Parsis".

The Parsis also have a unique advantage in being able to mix equally freely with Hindus and Muslims. They are often able to be a friendly link between the two. They are also able to appreciate the work of Christian missionaries and, being good merchants, they know how to keep cordial relations with the powers that be.

Understanding the importance of education, the Parsis always are one step in advance of the others in the field of practical education.

Hindus should shed their social inhibitions and aloofness and make it a point to accept the friendship of such a community whole-heartedly. If Hindus hold themselves aloof from Parsis, Christians and Jews, they will only be proving the truth of the accusations made against them by Muslims.

Mineral Research

After a hearty breakfast at the 'Keekas', we went to see the Geological Museum. This museum was quite different from others we had so far seen. It was a living museum where experiments were carried on which helped both the Government and the Westerners in the shape of very useful information.

Tanganyika has rich mineral wealth. There are, of course, diamond and gold mines, but these are mere symbols of wealth. Here they have collected those minerals which are themselves useful for various purposes, and they are experimented on. Sometimes these minerals are ground and polished. Again they are put in acids and tested, they are put in furnaces and the resulting changes duly noted. They are carefully analysed, and thus their inmost secrets are

wrested from them. Just as the C.I.D. police scold, tease, flatter and even bully the accused to get at his secret, so do the scientists work for research. People who get interested in research have usually no time for anything else. These are the people who have added to the knowledge of mankind. Much expense has to be incurred for such experiments and on adequate laboratories. But a nation which cannot afford to spend money on such experiments can make no progress. As I came away from the museum I was thinking about the many things which our people had still to learn to do.

Near Dodoma there is a hill the top of which is shaped like a sitting lion. This Lion Hill is one of the places we were taken to visit.

Aloof Hindus

In the afternoon there was, as usual, a lunch given by the local Indian Association. As there were many English people present, we had to speak in English. Later the whole party was to go to Kongwa, 52 miles from Dodoma, to see another centre of the groundnut scheme. As I had some important correspondence to catch up with and had already seen the scheme working at Nachungwe, Saroj and I stayed behind. But in this we were unduly optimistic!

A couple of meetings were arranged and also a few interviews. The next day there was a women's meeting. Mrs Sheharabanu Keeka came with us to this meeting. She is deeply interested in education. Before her marriage she worked for several years in this field. If an overall committee for education is ever formed for East Africa, Mrs Keeka should most certainly be invited on it. Mrs Keeka happened to

mention that she was also very interested in literature. But here she was able to read only English. "Here it is impossible even to get to know of good Gujarati books. I asked the Hindu Mandal here to let me become a regular member so that I could borrow books from their library. They said: 'You cannot become a member, but you are welcome to borrow any books you like from the library.' But I would not feel comfortable if I took the books without paying the subscription."

This creates a very unfortunate impression. By saying "you cannot belong to our Association," Hindus prove their aloofness. Parsis feel that they should not be thus kept at arm's length, considering their sympathy for Hindu philosophy, manners and customs. In the very constitution of these associations there should be a clause stating that "Hindus and all who are in sympathy with Hindu culture can become members. When any particular Hindu custom or its reform is being discussed, these other members will not vote. Except for this one restriction they will be full members of the Mandal."

If this is too much, there should at least be a different set of rules for libraries allowing everyone to join them. Above all there must be the desire to make friends with everybody. As a rule the Hindus are apt to be so self-sufficient that they are not even aware of their aloofness and of its effect on others.

Oh, would some power the giftie give us
To see ourselves as others see us

In every meeting, therefore, I stressed again and again the need for a cosmopolitan outlook, cleanliness and sanitation and the mission of serving the Africans.

Our party returned from Kongwa at 4 in the afternoon and almost immediately we all went to Mrs Pyke's place for tea

New Revolution

At night there was a buffet dinner given by Mr and Mrs Dara Keeka. A buffet dinner is very convenient when time is short and the guests numerous. There is an informal atmosphere and one can meet and talk to many more people than one does otherwise. Speaking after dinner, I said that humanity had accepted three ideals for which great revolutions had taken place — liberty, equality and fraternity. France put an end to the old feudal system and established political equality. But, for this, rivers of blood had to flow. Through an equally bloody revolution, Russia established social equality and put an end to the capitalist class and to private property. Now it was up to India to establish brotherhood through an entirely novel type of revolution. For this it was necessary to do away with violence. "You can't shed other people's blood to establish your brotherhood with them! Village civilization will have to be encouraged. Three-fold justice, social, economic and racial, should precede the revolution for universal brotherhood.

"Here in Africa, a synthesis has to be brought about, out of the composite culture of India, the modern culture of Europe and the culture of the continent of Africa. The predominant note of this harmony will be brotherhood. A brotherhood between man and man and a famililhood among all religions."

Shri Appasahib then spoke briefly but forcefully about the need for settling all disputes in a non-violent manner and of the recognition of the reawakening of Asia.

Before leaving Dodoma the next morning, we saw two or three schools. The principal of the Indian Public School, Shri Quraishi, being a retired army man, was particularly successful with his pupils in the matter of drill. There is a separate Agakhani Girls' School where Mrs Turnbull is doing excellent work. It was interesting to see girls of the Indian Public School playing *kho-kho*.

XVI

NGORONGORO CRATER

Leaving the Dar-es-Salaam-Kigoma Railway, we took the northern motor road to Nairobi. Luckily for us, Shri Badrubhai was going in his own car to Nairobi. He joined us so that our whole party travelled most comfortably in three cars. Kamalnayan had bought a car in Tanga, and it had been sent over to Dodoma. The third was a boxbody which we had hired for the journey.

There are no dense forests in this tract nor any high hills worth the name. The *kacha* roads become very uneven during and after the rains. They would be unmotorable unless something was done to make them smooth. One way is to shave the unevenness of the road with a huge iron blade attached to a tractor. The other and more primitive method is to drag along the road a huge brush made up of twigs, shrubs and thorns. The two methods between them made the road fairly comfortable. This trick is worth being introduced in our own country.

Communal Amity

On both sides of the road as far as the eye could

reach stood huge trees like fielders in a cricket match. In India we call them *chirmula* or *gorakh-chinch*. They have huge glossy trunks but very poor branches.

In the interior villages, cut off as they are from modern culture, Hindu and Muslim shopkeepers live together in peace and amity. There are no quarrels simply because "religious culture" and newspapers have not yet invaded these places. Not stopping at Kondowa we went on to Babate and had lunch in the shop of a very hospitable Muslim shopkeeper. In his little drawing-room there was a German picture of two lions. The lions were specially well delineated.

Hurrying through our lunch, we set off again. We were now passing through quite a different kind of country. On the left we were passing a huge salt-water lake — Maniara. There are many wild animals around this lake. On our right was the mountain Losimingur. We passed the village of Karatu. Between Karatu and Oldeani, Mr Badru's car came to a standstill. No amount of wooing could make it change its mind. We refused to leave him there alone in the jungle, more so as he has some trouble in one of his legs. But he refused to let us stay. "I have done this journey many, many times. I know my car. The over-heated engine will cool down in an hour or so and the car will be amenable once more." At last we went on to Oldeani. But we could feel at ease only after we had sent off a bus to help Shri Badru as soon as we reached there.

On our way we saw numerous well-kept and beautiful plantations of the Europeans. Here they grow tea, coffee and wheat. We, however, had come here to see the famous crater of an extinct volcano where wild animals like lions and elephants live. It

was getting dark when, leaving Oldeani, we took the road to Ngorongoro. In a few minutes we started climbing. At first we saw two little rabbits against the beam of our headlights. A little further on there was a big leopard on the roadside. Dazzled by the headlights of the car, he slunk away to the side of the road, and looking right and left disappeared into the jungle. We went on.

The Wild Buffalo

It had now become quite dark. The country lay bathed in very pale moonlight. Suddenly there was a very big animal right in our way on the road. While we wondered whether it was an elephant or a rhino, the two threatening horns on its forehead proclaimed it a wild buffalo. This is supposed to be the most terrible of all wild animals. Shikaris fear it more than they fear lions or rhinos. Even elephants and lions avoid wild buffaloes. Shikaris say that it is possible to understand and circumvent other animals, but the wild buffalo, whether he is hungry or not, alone or in a herd, is bound to attack once he becomes suspicious. His attack is so vicious that it is almost impossible for anyone to escape it.

The huge buffalo in front of us seemed to be very pleased with himself. He was standing right across the road. Through the binoculars we were able to see the long hair near his neck and head. After a while, he turned his head towards us and stared at the car. After gazing our fill, we turned off the lights. Even in the pale moonlight we looked at each other for quite a while. Though he was not in a mood to attack us, what guarantee was there that we would not attack him? So after waiting for a while to be sure that we

were not going to do anything, he slowly disappeared in the jungle to the left of the road. On the right were high mountains. If only it had been daytime, we would have got out of the car to see where he went.

Cold and Mist

On our left was a valley. From a spot further ahead, we could see inside the Ngorongoro crater and in it something that looked like a lake shone in the moonlight. When we reached the top it was impossible to see anything. There is a camp of about a dozen huts here built by the Government for tourists. Very comfortable, if not luxurious, arrangements had been made by the local merchants to lodge us and food as usual was more than enough. After dining together in the large dining hut, we went to sleep in different log-cabins dreaming of the huge, 40 miles wide crater which we would see in the morning.

On our way, around lake Maniara, we had seen countless antelopes, ostriches, zebras, wildebeests and other animals. Now we were eagerly wondering what we would see in the morning. It being delightfully cold at this height, we had a most refreshing sleep and after the morning prayers, stepped out into a veritable sea of white mist! It tickled our foreheads, eyes and ears. It moved two or three paces as we moved forward, but closed in on us from behind. The big trees around looked like ghosts in the mist, and as we approached nearer, they looked like huge bears because of their mossy hanging bark. Nestling beneath the trees, the log-cabins made quite a picture. As the place is 8,500 ft. above sea-level both the cold and the mist last till quite late in the day. I had to be

in Moshi *via* Arusha by the afternoon and so could not wait for the mist to disperse. We started at once. Shri Kamalnayan and others of our party decided to stay on. After 10, they were able to see the whole crater and some of the wild animals inside it.

Jungle in Crater

No one can tell when the Ngorongoro crater was created. But when this huge crater was full of boiling lava, not even birds could have ventured to fly within 100 miles of it. Today all is quiet. The bottom of the crater has become like a meadow. There is water in it and jungles have grown up here. Who could have planted these big trees? The birds must have brought the seeds from far and wide. Trees grew into forests. Animals came here seeking food. How did they climb to this height and made it their permanent home? I wonder if their descendants know or care about their history? Even if they did how could they tell us?

We were happy to have been able to spend a night at the top of this extinct volcano. The same night I received a warmly affectionate greeting card for "Father's Day" from my son Satish from Ottawa, Canada. I could not help being grateful to the universal postal system which could fetch me a message of love from far away America to this wild place in the heart of Africa.

XVII

TWO MOUNTAINS

One party left Ngorongoro after an early breakfast because I had to reach Moshi *via* Arusha by the afternoon, for a lecture. As we descended, the mists were left behind us and we could see the beautiful landscape around Oldeani. The golden land lay spread beneath us with clouds and sunshine making a most attractive pattern. Coming to Karatu we again saw giraffes, ostriches and many kinds of deer and antelopes. One antelope so forgot its shyness and fear that it sat still until our car came very near it. Then, changing its mind all of a sudden, it leapt into the air and was off in the twinkling of an eye !

Here, for the first time, we saw the giraffe running. That very morning I had said, "We have seen many giraffes standing sedately with horns like tiny binoculars pushed upon their foreheads. I wonder what they look like while running" And lo, within a few hours we saw the giraffe running and it was like the undulating motion of the waves of the ocean. Seeing this graceful movement one feels that this dignified animal would not run awkwardly even to save its life.

Gujarati Hospitality

In Karatu a Gujarati shopkeeper insisted on giving us refreshments. He reproached us for not stopping at his place on the way up and loaded our car with gifts of fruit and sweets ! Such unselfish and loving hospitality was very touching. There was nothing we could have done for these kind people. It was more than likely that we would never meet again.

And yet, they treated us like members of their own family. Wherever we went throughout East Africa, we received this sort of warm and loving welcome from our Gujarati brothers and sisters.

We went due north as far as Angauku mountain. Then leaving the village of Monduli on the left, we took the road to the east. Very soon we saw Mount Meru, its peak hidden in the clouds, its base spreading over a distance of nearly 75 miles. Then came the beautiful city of Arusha. The Europeans have turned it into a garden city. Shri Trilokinath Vora who had driven us down had to get off here. We continued our journey in the same car. On both sides of the road were prosperous *shambas* (estates) of the European settlers. Crossing the tiny, Usa river we passed miles of meadow land. We also had to cross the Tanga-Arusha railway three times. And at last we were able to see the long-dreamt-of Kilimanjaro mountain at close quarters.

Lovely Kilimanjaro

At first there was just a graceful white arc amongst the clouds. It took us a few moments to be sure that it was not one of the clouds. Once convinced, we could see that Kilimanjaro was slowly slipping out of the veil of mist. Every minute more and more of the graceful peak was revealed to our joyous eyes. What a glorious sight! There was more snow than usual on Kilimanjaro that day so that its melting streaks could be seen flowing down to a great distance. So beautifully rounded is the peak that it is difficult to believe that there is a crater at the top. I felt that the whole trip was well worth it just to see the lovely Kilimanjaro.

The car was taking us nearer to Moshi and to

Kilimanjaro all this time. As there were many curves in the road we were able to enjoy the view of Kilimanjaro from various angles. Kilima means a mountain and Anjaro means high or shining. Both senses suit this mountain. I was told that a road goes up it. The next day we went some distance along this road to visit an African chief.

Though we stayed for a very short time at Moshi, we were able to make the most of it. We were guests of Shri Sadruddin, son of the Hon'ble Vali Mohammad Nazarali. Mrs Sadruddin is a very capable lady interested in social work. In the afternoon the rest of our party also arrived. There was a crowded meeting at the Plaza theatre where, for the first time, I expressed my opinion that after the independence of India the whole of Asia looks to us with love and respect. So we must now call ourselves Asians.

In the evening there was a party given by the newly formed Asian Association, right at the foot of the gracious Mt. Kilimanjaro. Appasahib made a very fine speech. Here we met Mr Bennet who has done much towards the progress of the "Chhaggas" or "Vachhaggas" as the tribe here is called. He is the real inspiration behind their co-operative endeavour. He is a living example of how much one sincere person can do for the African race.

At night there were informal talks and discussions with the local Hindus, which lasted till nearly midnight. Such discussions formed a very important part of our travels.

Mr Jhonston, Deputy Commissioner of Moshi, is a very broad-minded and enlightened officer. I had an enjoyable talk with him that evening. I learnt many things from his conversation.

An African Chief

Next morning we went to see an estate run by the Vachhagga Welfare Centre at Marangu. Nearby lived a chief of the clan — Chief Petro. As his guests, we had a chance to see how an African family lives. Behind his newly-built modern house, we saw the round African hut, which we were allowed to see from within. I was reminded of the Himalayan hill tribes when I saw here the way men and cattle live together in almost total darkness. The Africans drink both the milk and the blood of the cow. We were told in detail how the calf — or cow — is tied to a tree, how a particular vein is cut by an arrow or a knife and when the required amount of blood has been taken how the bleeding is stopped and the wound attended to. I did not have the courage to see this experiment with my own eyes, nor did I care to ask the members of our party what they had seen.

Chief Petro was greatly interested in hearing from me about the village industries of Wardha and about basic education. When I showed him samples of hand-spun cloth and hand-made paper, he felt that these industries should be introduced in Africa. But he was specially interested in methods of bee-keeping by which honey is collected without destroying the bees.

In Chief Petro's garden we tasted delicious, freshly roasted corn on cob. The maize was of such a size and so sweet that I wished it were possible to take some of the seed to sow in India. Maize-flour is the staple food of the Africans. With it they cook a particular variety of big bananas, which are not very sweet. Also, sometimes they have a variety of sweet

potatoes. We ate African maize at many places but nowhere was it as tasty as at Chief Petro's.

Returning, we had a quick lunch and started back for Arusha. We once again made the most of the lovely view we had of Kilimanjaro all along the way. We reached Arusha before 4 p.m. and became guests of Shri Narsibhai Mathuradas, who is a nephew of Shri Nanji Kalidas Mehta.

The evening tea party given by the Indian Association was attended by the Provincial Commissioner and his wife. Among other Europeans there were a few Greeks and Danes. Among Asians there were, besides Indians, some Arabs also. And among the Africans there was a fair number of local Abyssinians and Somalis. In front of us rose the great Mount Meru. There were no snows on Meru at this time of the year. Even without the crown of snows it regally predominated the surrounding country.

Kilimanjaro and Meru are long-standing witnesses to the history of men, animals, rivers and lakes of Africa. In ancient times many African chiefs must have strengthened their friendship by pledging it in the name of these two mountains or sworn by these mountains to wreak vengeance on their enemies. These two mountains make no resolutions; they have no predilections. Even the rain that falls on them, they give away, in the form of streamlets to rivers like Usa, Pangani and Tsavo to make the lands around fertile.

At the big dinner given by our host that night most of the guests were European settlers. I was asked to speak on non-violence in peace and war. There were interesting questions and answers in which the Europeans took a leading part. Among

them was a police officer with a deep sense of duty. He wanted to meet me again for special discussion. In the morning, he came and discussed at length the various theories of crime and punishment. He seemed to be a man with a sense of responsibility. He did not have much of an opinion about the honesty of Indians but had genuine respect and admiration for Narsibhai.

A Lake and a Lady

After the morning discussions we went to see the beautiful lake of Deluti which is a real gem. Its existence is due to a volcano. Near this lake is the even more beautiful garden belonging to an English lady — Mrs Royden. During the war, she used to manage 14 other estates of friends who had gone on military service. She talked of the Egyptian pyramids and their mystic significance. The paintings in her house spoke of her good taste in art.

XVIII

AMBOSELI

The two towns of Arusha and Moshi represent human civilization to the south of the two mountains. Amboseli represents wild life that is protected by man to the north of those mountains. On our way to the National Park of Amboseli *via* Namanga, we stopped for a while to see a farm run by a young Indian, Shri Rajnikant Thakore. It is very ably run and is well known hereabouts as the Aldoniu Shamba. The farm is surrounded by pretty little hillocks. Cows, bulls and other animals are reared scientifically. There is a very good dairy where they prepare butter and cheese on a commercial scale.

The Indians for the most part have preferred to set up shops in towns and villages and go in for trade. Recently they have started sisal, wattle and sugar factories. But very few have gone in for agriculture. That is why the Patels of Magole near Morogoro and the Thakores of Aldonu stand out as exceptions

After a delicious breakfast of the fresh products of the dairy farm, we set out for Amboseli

The National Bank

At Namanga the road branched off for Amboseli. Here we met two Konkani Muslims who spoke Marathi, my mother tongue. One of them, Shri Mohammad Omar Sahib, told us very interesting stories of how his father had refused to bow to the English and how he had opened a rest house for Indians to avoid their being insulted by Europeans. Mohammad Sahib is a keen shikari. He has served the aborigines — Mashais — so well that they trust him completely and take his advice on all matters. When Mohammad Sahib needed a piece of land to open his hotel, the English tried their best to prevent him from getting any land. As soon as the Mashai chief heard of this difficulty, he offered and sold a piece of his best land to Mohammad Sahib in face of the strong displeasure of the English, who asked him why he was "partial to these Indians?" The Mashai chief gave a frank and fearless reply: "Mohammad Sahib is our friend and well-wisher. It gives us pleasure to do all we can for him"

As streams from all directions come and join a river so it was with our party. Shri Appasahib, Shri Inamdar, Kamalnayan and his family, Saroj, Sharad and myself came from Dodoma. Shri Narsibhai

and his brother joined us at Arusha. From Ngorongoro we were joined by Shri Jashbhai Desai, his son Niranjan and young Ajit Shahane. From Aldouu Shri Rajanikant joined in his car. At Namanga the northern party from Nairobi joined us, consisting of Dr and Mrs Nathu, Shrimati Leela Phatak (a friend of Shrimati Nalini Pant) and Shri Jal Contractor, a friend of Saroj's. Our greatly augmented party set out for Amboseli most enthusiastically. What with cars, buses and trucks, and with people sitting not only inside but also on the roofs of our various vehicles we looked like an advancing army! Instead of guns and other weapons of destruction we carried torches and binoculars. We were out not to kill animals but to survey them. Whoever enters this National Park has to make up his mind not to hurt either animal or man.

Thorny Trees

We made our way through shrubs and bushes, along a primitive road, towards the east. On the way we saw huge cactus and other thorny trees providing a safe shelter for birds. Birds build their nests at the extreme end of slender branches where they hang and sway like Chinese lanterns. As the trees are thorny, wild animals cannot climb them to get at the eggs. How grateful the birds must be for the thorns of trees.

After travelling through about 30 miles of jungle, we turned to the south entering the sandy bed of the dry Amboseli lake. There was sand all around us as far as the eye could see. And far away on the other side stood the stately and yet friendly Kilimanjaro.

Crossing the whole lake-bed, we entered the Amboseli forest and National Park — where the Government has made it a criminal offence to kill or

molest animals, with the result that the animals in such national parks have become less dangerous for men. It must be made quite clear here that this "protection" for animals, birds and trees is from man alone. The animals cannot afford to be non-violent amongst themselves!

Hunt for Elephants

Before going to the luxurious camp specially prepared for us, we climbed a nearby hill to see if we could catch a glimpse of the elephants who sometimes, we were told, gathered on the further side in the evenings. There were no roads; the cars had to be steered between trees, over ditches and rough tracts, mostly by guesswork. It just flashed through my mind that it would be awkward indeed if the car got struck here and some wild animal attacked us. Such thoughts lasted only until, the fever of the chase put everything else out of the mind. Soon our enthusiasm got the better of us. So much so that our trust in our cars and buses became quite reckless. The cars were driven up the hill! We peered all round with glasses and binoculars to our eyes! But alas! not a single animal could we see. All of them seemed to have entered into a regular conspiracy against us.

To make things worse, a little bird, out to enjoy the cool of the evenings, came up and mocked us quite heartlessly. Retracing our steps we wandered for miles, eagerly scrutinizing the droppings of elephants and oscillating between hope and despair according as they were fresh or dry. Now it was quite dark and the car-lights opened their eyes. In the distance we suddenly saw a huge animal. Going nearer we saw that it was a huge rhino with a baby rhino at her side. Looking through the binoculars, I saw that the rhino

(mother) was limping. She must have had a fight with an equally strong adversary.

Luxurious Camp

Kamalnayan and party were in the car ahead of us. They were fortunate in having the sight of three lions ! When our car reached the place we were just able to catch a glimpse of the tail of one of the disappearing lions. We heard that there were nearly 15 lions roaming in that area. We turned back disappointed to our camp. I was completely taken aback when I saw the luxury of the place. Several small tents and a *shamiana*, little tables and chairs arranged as in a fashionable restaurant, mattresses, lanterns, all kinds of soft drinks, and so many different kinds of things to eat, including plenty of fruits. Good clean drinking water (the most difficult thing to get in a forest) was thoughtfully provided in a huge barrel.

There are many Europeans in this land who have taken up hunting as a profession. An Indian has also taken up this profession — Shri Tarloksinghji is a doughty hunter. Because of his love for Shri Appasahib and because he had heard that Gandhiji's people had come from India, Shri Tarloksinghji and his companion, Shri Rana, had brought equipment and arranged all these facilities in this faraway forest. He and members of his household came and helped us in every way. The camp was put up here because water was available nearby. As this also happened to be a favourite resort of the elephants, they had come round earlier when the tents were being put up. But we were not fortunate enough to see them that night.

Fire is the only protection against wild animals in a forest. So several fires were kept going around our camp.

After dinner when we had our evening prayers, I wondered how many Indians could have come in this forest 4,000 miles away from India and prayed here? Could the sages of old whose verses I was reciting have come to these forests?... As we prepared for bed, we heard that Appasahib, Kamalnayan and some others were thinking of slipping off for a drive in the forest to try and see some wild animals. This annoyed me. After all I was not so old to be left behind. I asked if the lorry could be got ready. Mohammad Sahib was game. So we all crowded into the lorry and started off on our own.

Song for Rhino

In utter darkness the tracks made by other cars were not visible. We often had to turn back as we came to places where the lorry could not go. In our wanderings we met Appasahib's car returning. He said: "A rhino attacked us; we rushed away at full speed, but in so doing we lost our way. After a lot of wandering we have at last found our way back." We felt that we, too, should have some experiences to boast of, so we wandered for miles without caring for petrol or considering the lorry. Though we were not fortunate enough to see many animals, it was fun to see various trees and bushes in the ghostly light of the car. We did see a single rhino! And we also saw a hyena running away from us. Seeing the rhino, young Jal was inspired to sing a familiar love-song:

"Oh beloved, why do you hide from me?

It is our first meeting!"

I am afraid this touching song was quite wasted on the thick-skinned rhino.

If we had not determined to make the most of the next day, we would not have woken up till 8 a.m. the

next morning, so tired were we. After four hours of refreshing sleep we were up at 4 a.m. and after prayers started off at 5-30. At first fortune did not favour us. After much wandering we at last saw an elephant in the distance. While we looked at him hungrily, he walked away and disappeared into the neighbouring meadow fanning his huge ears all the way.

Shy Jambos

Going further we saw guinea fowl, monkeys and several kinds of deer. While we enjoyed seeing them, we were far from being satisfied, for we were longing to see fierce animals like lions, elephants, rhinos and wild buffaloes. Despairing of luck in one direction we turned back and went in another. Coming across fresh droppings of elephants, our hopes revived, and a little further we saw two huge elephants completely lost in their game of kicking up clouds of dust and pulling out trunkfuls of grass with joyous abandon. The sight of man does not annoy the elephant but if there is any noise or if, owing to the breeze, the smell of man reaches the elephant, it gets enraged. So after making sure that the breeze was not in the direction of the animal, we slowly walked towards one of them. The elephant saw us but went on with his play. When we approached nearer, he was displeased. He just turned away and walked off. We drove off towards the other elephant. When we went near, this elephant also seemed to be bored with our company and strolled off in a dignified manner.

We were about to return when one of the Africans told us by signs: "There is a *simba* (lion) nearby." At once the curiosity of our soul was concentrated in our eyes. Though we longed to see the lion, the lion unfortunately had no anxiety to see us; so

coming out before us from behind the grass and shrubs, it vanished into the forest. The lion, though strong, is not a cruel animal. There is a nobility mixed with a tinge of contempt on its face. This lioness (as there was no mane we took it that it was a lioness) had just glanced at us in passing, but it was quite clear that she thought it beneath her dignity to take any notice of us mere human beings. But we were too happy at having seen her to care much.

Stately Procession

Thanking our kind hosts we were starting on our return journey, perfectly satisfied with our trip, when a man came and told us that "if you turn a little to the left, you will see many elephants." We set off eagerly in the given direction. We did not have far to go. There they were — not one or two but eight wild elephants breaking off branches and chewing them. It was a fascinating sight. We left the car and started walking towards them. A baby elephant was the first to see us. Lifting his trunk and spreading out both his ears he made it plain to us: "You may be good people, but we do not want you." At this clear sign of displeasure, we stopped for an instant. But as he resumed his breakfast, we advanced cautiously.

I doubt if we could have reached the car in time if the elephants had decided to attack us. Even if we had, the car is not safe from an elephant. He can overturn a car by catching the wheel in his trunk and giving it a heave. Also it can reduce a car to pulp by giving it one butt of the head. Yet our irrepressible curiosity drove us forward. Many have lost their lives through such curiosity. But the desire for knowledge and more still the thrill of experience sometimes overcomes the instinct of self-preservation. The elephants

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were displeased at our impudence, but did not get angry with us. Thinking that it was too much of a bother to try and teach manners to these bipeds, they decided to leave this 'infested' spot. Methodically, one huge tusker placed himself at the lead, another equally large animal stayed to be the last. The female elephants and the babies were placed in between. And so, in single file, the procession of eight elephants slowly disappeared into the woods. There was not the slightest haste. We stood transfixed even after the last of them had disappeared, as if the wonderful scene could still be seen in the air before us.

Processions of tame elephants one has often seen. Ten, twenty or even fifty tame elephants can be brought together, but rare indeed is the sight of eight wild elephants—huge animals with curved tusks, freely wandering and breaking off trees and eating them at their own sweet will! The sight of these dignified and grand animals filled me with joy. I shall never forget the scene.

Lost in Forest

On our way back our party was split up. The car ahead took the correct route. Lost in the joy of retrospection, we took the wrong turning. To make sure of the direction I was turning round every little while to look at Kilimanjaro. I felt there was some mistake, but there were no other car tracks to be seen. I kept on looking at the map and saying, "We are going in the wrong direction." Others said, "Oh, no, it is all right." And all of us equally ignorant! Each one a prey to uncertainty. Each one would make different suggestions with varying degrees of confidence.

We wandered back and forth in mounting uncertainty, the only consolation being that it was a

pleasant morning, we had had a good breakfast and there was sufficient petrol in the car. Being in an area covered with short grass we could see for miles around. The way we rushed around in all directions would have led a stranger to believe that we had been commissioned with the job of measuring and surveying the length and breadth of Amboseli and that we were making frantic efforts to earn a reward by finishing it within a given time limit.

At first even the sensation of being lost was enjoyable. But gradually the breakfast was digested and the petrol was going up in smoke. What would happen if we ran out of petrol? We kept blowing the horn of the car to notify our companions that we had lost our way. But not even a hill was near to send back an echo.

After a long time we saw one of the cars of our party far far away on the left rushing off leaving a trail of dust behind. We set off full speed in that direction but could neither reach them nor attract their attention. After following many a false trail we at last crossed the open plain and entered the forest of bushes where we found the right way after some difficulty. Now another fear arose. Our car was becoming quite hungry. Machines, unlike man, cannot work on an empty stomach.

Back to Nairobi

The hanging bird-nests welcomed us and showed us the right way. Late in the hot afternoon, we reached Namanga and had a much delayed lunch.

Namanga, which yesterday had been a place of meetings, today became a place of farewells. Some returned to Arusha, some stayed on in Namanga and the rest of us, distributing ourselves in three cars, set off

for Nairobi. It was a beautiful road. On the way we saw several wild animals, specially the giraffe, the wildebeest and the zebra, along the 102 miles to Nairobi. Now the old National Park near Nairobi seemed a tame affair to us! As I had to be present at a meeting in memory of Gijubhai, the same evening, our car made haste to reach Nairobi.

The first half of our East African tour was thus over

XIX

NAIROBI AGAIN

This time our stay in Nairobi was just an interlude between the tour of Tanganyika and that of Uganda. Speaking at the Gijubhai anniversary I said that Gijubhai, the pioneer champion of child education in Gujarat, practised as a lawyer for some time in East Africa. He even learnt Swahili here. Later he dedicated himself to the cause of child education. About 40 of his pupils were working for child education in East Africa.

At night we dined at Shri Ibrahim Natu's place. It was a big party attended by many Europeans also. After a short after-dinner speech by me, there were questions and answers. Ibrahimbhai asked a question which was often asked by Europeans. "Some people think that the Indians are enemies of the Africans because they are driving the Africans away from all smaller jobs. What is your opinion about it?"

I said: "You have asked a very good question for which I am really grateful. Ever since I came to East Africa, I have been going for my people saying: 'You do not mix with the Africans as much as you

should, you should introduce them to the ins and outs of business. They should not feel that you are strangers here. So for once if I take this opportunity to say a well-deserved word in their favour, it will do my soul good.

"You say that Indians have filched many small vocations from Africans. I shall come to that in a minute. But what about the big vocations? The biggest vocation is that of governing. They used to govern themselves. Who relieved them of that calling?"

"Now I should like to know the small jobs which the Africans knew and which Indians have filched from them. Can you give me a single example? On the other hand, I can give example after example of Indians penetrating into lonely jungle villages where even Europeans hesitate to go, staying there unprotected and teaching the completely naked people there to wear clothes by giving them a pair of trousers for a mere shilling. Indians have been training Africans as their assistants in their professions and thus teaching them crafts like carpentry and tailoring. They have taught them all kind of cooking, thus enabling them to be good servants in European households. Our people have helped to build railways here. In the building of the railway many Indians were eaten up by wild beasts: and many of them died of malaria. Indians have served both Africans and Europeans. But we do not know how to blow our own trumpet.

"There are people who can talk of service while taking away all the wealth they can, and there are those who serve at the risk of their lives, taking only just what they need, and yet when their services are mentioned, say diffidently. 'We have come here just

to make a living.' It ill becomes anybody to speak disparagingly of such people.

Old-fashioned Belief

"And staying in those far away jungles, how much do our people earn? If they lived in some comfort and spent some money on pleasures, they would be unable to save a shilling. Our people still have the old-fashioned belief that a son should pay off his father's debts even if he is not required to do so by law. In this way, after living here in strict economy, if someone sends money home to pay off his father's debt, or gives something to an educational institution or helps in the rebuilding of a temple, there should be no objection. Our people have not taken possession of the whole country of the Africans; we live and work among the Africans. We have not needed armies for our protection. If the Africans hated our being here we would never have been able to live alone and unprotected in far-away jungles.

"Now I am urging our people to pay more attention to the education of their children. Let the Africans also benefit. Spend money earned in Africa in Africa itself. This country where you stay is a member of the Commonwealth. Our country has also joined the Commonwealth of its own free will. Therefore our relations with the British should be those of sincere friendship.

"Some day 'race superiority' is bound to disappear. Then we shall all work together in this country to establish universal brotherhood."

Good Testimony

An English journalist of international fame, Mr Vernon Bartlett, was in Africa at the time. It is said that he was prevented from meeting Indians

freely Being invited to this dinner, he had come on condition that he would not be asked to speak.

After my speech, he felt like expressing his mind. He got up and said something to this effect: "The guest of today says modestly that he will not presume to give advice to people after just two months in this country like a globe-trotter I have been here just three days and yet I am going to give my opinion ! I was here three years ago At the time I heard much against the Indians This time I saw in Kampala that an Indian has donated a beautiful park to the town and built a townhall too. They have given scholarships for Africans Now what are these people to do ? If they send a little money home to their country, it is said that they are bleeding Africa white And if they decide to make their home here and buy land for the purpose, it is said that they are buying up Africa. What then are they expected to do ? I have understood more in these 20 minutes than I would have if I had travelled much more. Many more people like our guest of today should come here again and again and remove misunderstandings."

Problem of Education

One day the headmaster of a primary school came to see me, and asked the hackneyed question whether literacy should be started with the alphabet or the sentence. The question was a relief to me after discussing political and social questions all these days. I told him that education should not begin with literacy at all. Children should be encouraged to learn about things by direct observation and experimentation They should try to work out their ideas through creative activity.

Language and literature they should learn

orally Children should be asked to learn by heart easy, interesting dialogues and action-songs. They should also learn good specimens of literature by heart. Parents should write to them letters which the teacher will read out. Children may dictate replies to the teacher. Only when they have thus felt the need of reading and writing should they be introduced to reading and writing. The question whether letters are a unit or a sentence loses all its importance under this system. In our Indian languages, it is always the syllable that is a unit. A letter is always written with its inherent a or i or u or e or o. One vowel together with one or many consonants makes our *akshar*. This is the natural unit of sound. Vowels and consonants are the result of abstract analysis.

Another friend came for advice about something personal. He was going to England for medical studies. He thought his wife should accompany him and take a nursing course there. But they had a child of six and did not know what to do about him. The boy seemed to me to be a precocious child. He offered to go alone to India and stay there in some boarding school and be under the guardianship of some relative there. This solved the problem.

I don't think a boy of six in India would have shown such pluck and courage. A stay in foreign countries does develop certain moral qualities. All honour to parents whose training results in such self-reliance !

A Pleasant Function

I was asked to lay the foundation-stone of the building of the Maharashtra Mandal. The fact is that I have not stayed in Maharashtra at all after my college education was over, in spite of the fact that it is

the province of my birth I have stayed in Gujarat for 25 years, and that too at the beginning of the Gandhi era so that I am known more to Gujaratis than to the people of my province. Most Gujaratis have read my writings. They correspond with me and own me as one of themselves. To the Maharashtrians I am comparatively a stranger!

So I was specially pleased to be asked by the Maharashtrians to lay the foundation-stone of their building. Maharashtrians in this country are either Government servants or they are in private service. They are not rich and are comparatively small in number. They collected a little money with difficulty and got some as a loan, and acquiring a piece of good land started this building. As I write this the building is well nigh completed.

The Hon. Mr Mathu is a leader of the Africans. We had met him once or twice at dinner parties. He wanted to take us to his place so that we could meet his family and some friends for an informal talk. We gladly went to his house about 26 miles from Nairobi. It was a pleasure to meet his wife and children. After some refreshments we went out into the garden and settled ourselves for a friendly chat on the lovely thick lawn.

Strange Doubts

At first I was asked about Gandhiji's basic education. Suddenly Mr Mathu said, "Kaka Sahib, I am thoroughly convinced of one of the things you say and that is the need for us to learn one of the Indian languages. We can only understand India and maintain cordial relations with her through an Indian language. I am going to start learning Gujarati at once."

One of his friends asked "Which would you advice us to learn ? Gujarati or Hindi ? Which is going to be of greater use to us ? "

I said " In the time you waste in thinking about this dilemma, you can easily learn both of them. These languages have so much in common that after learning one it is child's play to learn the other. Gujarati will be more useful to you here as most of the Indians here are Gujaratis ; but if you come to India Hindi or Hindustani will be necessary."

Then we talked about the 40 African students who were studying in India. One of them had stood fifth in a Delhi University examination. In reply to another question I said : " Do not believe people who tell you that you are about a couple of thousand years behind the march of civilization and that it will take you at least a thousand years to reach the standard of India or Europe. A thousand years are not needed to overcome ignorance. Within 25 or 30 years, within one generation, you can become like the rest of the world. Superstitions and prejudices die hard, but ignorance is like a vacuum. It is not difficult to get rid of. Suppose the darkness of centuries is accumulated in a room. Does it congeal or thicken there ? The minute you open the doors or carry in a light, the darkness is as though it had never been."

Young Africans who were listening with attention were delighted with this simile and agreed heartily.

By a queer and interesting coincidence the proofs of the latest edition of my book of travels in Burma had come the same morning from India. It was exciting to examine the proofs of my easternmost travels outside India, sitting far away to the west in

the heart of Africa. I was re-reading my description of Burma's Irawady river while preparing to fly to see the source of the river Nile, the river beloved of Egypt. I could not help referring to this wonderful coincidence in the preface of the book on Burma.

XX

FLIGHT OVER LAKE "IMMORTAL"

Leaving Nairobi on the morning of June 26, we reached Kampala after a flight of two and a quarter hours. We started at 9 a.m. Below us were the beautiful Highlands of Kenya.

Well-tilled fields, shapely hills with streams running between them, the beautiful bungalows of the Europeans and the round huts of the poor Africans: they all passed under our eyes. I had hoped to be able to see Mount Elgon (14,000 ft.) on the horizon, but there were too many clouds all around. After a while, Lake Victoria came into view. It is known to our Sanskrit Puranas as *Amara* (Immortal). In the whole world there is not to be found a larger sweet-water lake than this. It is something to be able to boast of 27,000 square miles of sweet water. I tried to drink in the whole expanse through the eyes.

Thrilling Flight

Far away on the left was the town of Kisumu clinging to the lake like a calf to its dam. The shores of the lake are full of curves. Islands, big and small, are scattered in the lake and the surface of the water is full of the most charming crinkles. The whole lake looked so fascinating that had I been a poet like Valmiki I would have burst forth into poetry on the

spot. A few boats were sailing on the lake with their sails unfurled while little baby clouds floated in the air above. How they gambolled and scampered ; if they had known how much they enhanced the beauty of the lake, they would never have scattered so soon. But this was not their fault. It was we who advanced rapidly and left them all behind. It was a thrilling and romantic journey over this "Immortal" lake.

No matter how fast we flew, keeping to our side through thick and thin was the shadow of our plane. It ran with the greatest of ease over land and water, islands and clouds. When the plane flew very high, the shadow became white instead of dark. At times it even had to leave the earth and fly in the air ; but it never wavered in its loyalty and remained faithfully by our side till the very end. Further on we saw parallel white lines on the lake. They were not like foamy wavelets on the surface of the ocean, but rather like the lines that are made by scratching on dry skin in cold weather. They ran diagonally across the surface of the lake, and looked particularly charming when we passed above them. I have not been able to discover yet what causes these lines.

We were now nearing Entebbe. The aerodrome of Entebbe is right on the shore of the lake. With the dexterity of a sea-gull, our aeroplane landed safe and dry !

As soon as we alighted from the plane, we were taken charge of by the leading Indian citizens.

Kampala is 19 miles from Entebbe. Entebbe is the capital of the English officers of Uganda. The English Governor stays there, while the mercantile capital of Uganda is Kampala. The Kabaka (king) of the Africans lives in Kampala. So it can be called the

native capital of Uganda. We went on to Kampala immediately.

During our air trip we had crossed the Equator and re-entered our Northern Hemisphere

The nineteen miles of motor road from Entebbe to Kampala passes through very charming scenery. After enjoying the beauty of the lake from the air, it gave us fresh delight to see it from different angles from various parts of the road.

Of the many towns we saw in East Africa, three are absolutely unforgettable. Kampala because of the verdant beauty of its hills; Dar-es-Salaam because of the unique, colourful loveliness of the sea-coast; and Costermansville on the lake Kivu for its exquisite network of hills rushing into water.

Like the town of ancient Rome, Kampala was built on seven hills. But as this young town grew, two more hills had to be gradually added to it and today it is "a town of nine hills." As we neared Kampala the slender minarets of a mosque on one of the hills looked so beautiful that we decided not to leave Kampala without going up and seeing it.

Story of a Mosque

There is a history about this mosque. The Muslims here wanted a good site for a mosque. A relative of the Kabaka's gave them this site free. The Europeans, grudging so much beautiful land being lost to them, said to the Muslims: "What will you do with so much land? You have no money for building your mosque. We shall give you enough money to build it if you will just keep land enough for the mosque and give us the rest of it." The Muslims answered that they would not give up any of the land, but would build the mosque in due time after

collecting the necessary funds. This mosque is nearly complete now.

On two of the other hills there are two churches, one Roman Catholic and the other Protestant. Both are fine buildings, well situated with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside.

On the first evening the local Seva Dal (Service League) welcomed us by giving a display of their drill etc. As almost the whole of the Indian population had gathered there, I said most of the things I wanted to say to my people here. After this for six days there was a succession of lunches, teas and dinners. The first night we were dining at the Nakasero Club. Here for the first time I noticed that wine is freely used at such functions.

I must note here with the greatest satisfaction that our sensitively considerate friend Jal Contractor made a point of not serving alcoholic drinks when he gave a dinner for us. That day I was very happy.

In Kampala we saw several important institutions for the Africans. The King's College, Budo, and the Makerere College between them have supplied most of their leaders to East Africa. They are run by trained educationists, each expert in his own subject.

The results of cultural education can be most clearly perceived in music and painting. We therefore made a point of asking for it wherever we could. I learnt a lot from a teacher who was trying to encourage original painting among her African students. In the drawings and paintings of the African students I found a special understanding of the many moods of nature and an ability to depict them in a striking manner. In spite of crudities of technique one could not help being struck by the depth of experience shown

in the pictures I said "These children have found for the first time a medium of expression for their deep feeling of oneness with nature. The European and Indian children have the same opportunity of observing nature night and day, but they have not been able to capture the spirit to the same extent, for the simple reason that our conception of culture today has become somewhat shallow"

The African students at Macarere for the greater part depicted only natural scenery. On enquiry I was told that they were chary about drawing man or animal because they were superstitious about it. I wondered whether Islamic influence was responsible for it. I enquired and found that neither reason was correct. It may be perhaps that the art teacher herself was partial to nature and so was able to encourage this best.

When we went to the little village of Gayaza and visited the excellent missionary school there, we saw many pictures of human beings painted by African students. Here also we found originality and life.

The examples we saw of purely African dancing were very much like those of the Mikiri tribes of Assam. Some of the movements are more voluptuous than emotional. There is a definite rhythm in their music but not much of melody. I wanted to hear pure African music without any Arabic or European admixture. The supposed African music which we heard did not appeal to us much.

Haunting Notes

The "Negro Spirituals" are well known and loved the world over. We were able to hear some of these as well as some Christian hymns. The African

girls and boys have an exceptionally sweet singing voice and some of them sang with very deep fervour.

At Gayaza and at the Alliance School near Nairobi, we heard a different kind of music altogether. Bits and pieces of pure African music were strung together with such artistry as to produce the grandeur of Western music. I felt that any system of music in the world would be enriched by incorporating in itself the raw material of this haunting African music.

XXI

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

At the Macarere College in Kampala and at various other places I discussed the language question in some detail. I saw that the English teachers as well as the rulers really believe that English will one day become the common language of the whole of Africa. Their experience in India has not succeeded in discouraging this belief.

They said: "Your case is different. India had a great civilization of her own, though different from ours. The languages which the Africans have are too many and so primitive as to have no script or literature. If modern science and modern thought are to be rapidly assimilated, the English language is indispensable."

I said: "There is no doubt that the English language must be learnt. The question is in which language should their daily life be expressed."

The English believe that there is no one African language which is likely to be accepted all over the

country. Some tribes have a strong prejudice against Swahili.

Others told me that this prejudice has been encouraged by the English. The English have taken it upon themselves to look after the development of the Swahili language. But the work progresses at an exceedingly slow pace. The English say that since they have succeeded in teaching the Africans English, they are going to continue the same policy.

Racial Superiority

The whole continent is not ruled by the British. In Belgian Congo there is an insistence that French should be the common language. In Mozambique and Angola they wish to have Portuguese as the main language. But these questions I did not raise. The whites seem to have made up their minds that just as Aryans came to India, imposed their civilization on the people of the land, and treating them as inferiors, took menial service from them, even so should the whites do with the people of Africa, and bringing them gradually under the influence of European culture and European languages establish a two-class society. Some whites confess this openly.

If the Europeans would not try to impose their civilization, but realize that the Africans have a very real civilization of their own and help them to try develop it, if they would shed their pride of racial superiority, and we, the Indians, give up the idea of running back to India after earning some money, then we could all work together to establish a grand world civilization through the synthesis of the African, Asian and European civilizations.

When I suggested to the African leaders that just as the Indians staying in East Africa learn Swahili or

Luganda, some of the Africans should learn Gujarati and Hindustani, they accepted it readily. It is a pity that our people have not realized the importance of it. At first they were not even prepared to accept my suggestion that they should not refuse to admit African pupils to Gujarati schools. I am glad to say that they have now agreed to it.

Gandhi College Plan

An officer of the Education Department came to see me in Kampala. He did not like the idea of a Gandhi College. "Why do you want another college", he asked me when the Macarere College is already there?"

I said: "I believe that this college is open only to the Africans."

"Why do you think so? It is open to students of all races."

"Well then, how many English students are there in the Macarere?"

"There are none at present because there is no attraction for them there. European students will come when the college expands."

"That would be a welcome step. Could all Indian students who wish to join be accommodated there today? Or would you have a rule -fixing certain percentages for each race?"

"Such rules are not advisable but there may have to be such a rule."

"What would happen then to the rest of the African and Asian candidates?"

"There is that difficulty. But what will you do to eliminate competition between the Gandhi College and the Macarere College?"

"We shall do what is done the world over. In each college certain subjects will be specially developed. Facultywise division of labour would be the proper solution. In the hostels of both the colleges there should be separate provision for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Apart from this, there will be a common life. I am sure some Europeans will come to our college also. There must be some who prefer to have an atmosphere of equality. We shall choose the best professors from whatever country we can.

"I have a new idea. Until a university has been established in East Africa our college should be affiliated to both London University and Bombay University."

"How can that be?" he asked surprised.

"It has not happened so far I grant, but what is to prevent it from being done now? Bombay University recognizes the degrees of London University and *vice versa*. East Africa, Britain and India are in the same Commonwealth. Why should such double affiliation be impossible?"

"There seems to be no reason why it should not be possible. I think it is a good idea of yours. In fact it would be very desirable."

"Representatives of both London and Bombay Universities will be on our syllabus committee. And the syllabus will then be passed by both the universities. People taking certain subjects may appear for the examinations of Bombay University and those taking certain other subjects of those of London University. Such an arrangement could easily be made."

Charge of Ingratitude

At Kampala I came to know Shri Kakubhai. He

speaks Luganda very well and the people here like and trust him. Once when the Africans were making trouble for the Indians, they told Kakubhai not to be anxious as no one would touch him or his property. And he was quite unscathed.

Some one told me once that the African servants are ungrateful. I am unable to accept such opinions. Human nature is the same the world over. Why, even the fiercest of beasts respond to kindness and love

Very few are really ungrateful. All too often the benefactor is impatient for collecting gratitude and not getting it soon enough and in the measure he wants he calls the other ungrateful. The more we expect gratitude the more of goodness does the other person expect us and so remains discontented.

It must not be forgotten either that for hundreds of years the Arabs, the Europeans and to a certain extent indirectly we also captured these people and sold them into slavery. We did not consider even the wellbeing of their bodies, leave alone the minds. It is surprising that the Africans have any faith left in humanity. No other race has suffered as much from peoples of other continents as has the African.

The Kabaka

The King of the Africans, the Kabaka, lives in Kampala. The queen is called the Nebagarika. We went to see the Kabaka who is a well-educated and cultured young man. He has studied in England. I heard people say that he is a gentleman of fine instincts but has now become discouraged, seeing that there is no real power left in his hands. We could not see the whole of his palace, as much of it was under repairs. Just in front of the palace there were some

round African huts. I was surprised at this but felt pleased. It seemed right that these symbols of African civilization should be near the palace. We had met the sister of the Nebagarika at the King's College, Budo, where she is teaching.

There is a very fine museum attached to the Macarere College. It contains fine examples of many of the arts and crafts developed by the Africans. Their utensils, hunting equipment, all kinds of musical instruments, horns of rhinos and of various other animals, many different ornaments, clothes, wooden images, instruments, etc. It is clear from all this that they have a civilization which has ceased to grow owing to adverse circumstances.

The Africans had evolved a way of life in consonance with their natural surroundings, climate, their flora and fauna, etc., and their own needs. One cannot help feeling that under the circumstances what they evolved was the best arrangement. Theirs may be a primitive civilization, but it contains within itself all the essential elements of culture.

Once they are encouraged to think along modern lines, they will have no difficulty in growing into the modern world. They have not shown themselves less able to organize or in any way less intelligent than any other race of the world.

Indian Mayor

During our stay in Kampala we were once invited to dinner by the Indians who were Government servants in Entebbe. The dinner was given at Victoria Hotel run by the Government. It is a very well run hotel.

On the last day there was a grand dinner at the same place given by Shri Dhirubhai, the eldest son of

Shri Nanji Kalidas Mehta. The acting Governor of Uganda and many officers attended this dinner.

I was glad to see that the Mayor of Kampala was a young Punjabi, Shri Maini. He is the first Indian Mayor. Both Indians and Europeans are well impressed by his ability. It gave me great pleasure to visit in his company the beautiful townhall of Kampala built and donated by one of my countrymen.

XXII

IN THE VILLAGES OF AFRICA

One can acquire a very good idea of the distinctive characteristics of a country by visiting its beauty-spots, its large towns, its factories and by meeting the people who count. But if one wishes to understand the atmosphere and the real conditions of the place and the characteristics of the people, it is necessary to visit the villages, little villages, preferably, which are off the main road. Only thus can the soul of a country be revealed to us.

On the last day of June, 1950, we were able to see three African villages. We first drove 12 miles from Kampala to Gayaza. Here we were very affectionately received by simple, honest and hardworking Indian shopkeepers. What pleased me more than anything else was the fact that they had asked some Africans also to join in this reception. It was satisfying indeed to see this friendly gathering where Indians and Africans mixed freely together.

An African chief who was present at this gathering got up to thank "the guests". He made a

very beautiful reference to the ties of affection between India and Africa, and expressed his feelings so gracefully, avoiding politics, that I felt sure that given the opportunity, this man could become a really good diplomat and statesman.

Missionaries at Work

Most of the members of our party now started off for Bombo while Appasahib and I visited a mission school on the way. The lady running this school has spent her life serving here. Living here alone, among the Africans, the missionaries establish schools. With hard work they turn into a garden whatever land they are able to secure. Living in the simplest of huts they create such beauty and order around them that anyone seeing them is convinced that with brains, heart and persevering effort, a full and satisfying life can be lived amidst the bleakest surroundings.

Here also we asked for music and paintings. We saw paintings not only on paper but also along the walls. I saw the life of Christ depicted in pure African style. In music, too, they have blended several African tunes to express Christian sentiments. So well is this done that I could not help seeking out the persons who had done it and congratulating them.

After the usual routine of speech-making and refreshments in Bombo, we went on to Vobulenz. It was specially pleasant to lunch, in the Indian style, with our Gujarati friends in an ordinary little village in the heart of Africa.

The missionaries here attended the evening meeting with keen interest. Once again I stressed the need for us to prove by a life of service that our presence here is useful and good for the Africans.

Source of the Nile

One of our main objects in going to Africa was to visit the source of the river Nile. After visiting the sacred sources of Indian rivers like the Ganga and the Jamuna, the Krishna and the Indrayani I had begun to feel that the source of the Nile also should be visited in the same reverential spirit. I named the place Nilotri in advance, on the analogy of Gangotri, the source of the river Ganga. On the first July we left Kampala by car for Jinja

The road to Jinja is very beautiful going up and down several gentle hills. As we covered the 52 miles from Kampala to Jinja our eagerness grew every minute. We were enraptured when our wish was granted even before entering Jinja. Reaching the bridge we saw on our right the vast Lake Victoria from which the river Nile takes a flashing leap into existence! Getting down from the car, we went to the side of the bridge and stood for a few moments looking at the Ripon Falls out of which the Nile flows on.

As I gazed at this amazing birth, it was as though I was vouchsafed a vision of the Goddess of the Nile. Her feet were covered with milky spray. There was a shining crown on her head, which was brought into glittering relief by the bright verdure of a beautiful tree behind her. Both her hands were filled with golden sheafs of young corn, and her face was radiant with motherly tenderness. This divine figure was not a clear blue, but rather of a faintly dusky fairness. Streams of water were flowing down her body and enhancing the glowing charm of her smiling countenance.

A Waterfall

After gazing to our heart's content, we turned to the left. The waters which we had seen rushing towards us on our right were flowing headlong away from us on the left producing a very different effect. We knew that a little further down on the left were the Owen Falls. In India these would hardly be regarded as waterfalls at all. A mere jump of a few feet hardly turns a flow into a fall ! Oh, no, in order to be recognized as a waterfall, the waters should crash down upon the earth from a great height and rebound upwards in a wild dancing ecstasy of foam and spray.

Gratified and gladdened by our first glimpse of the Nile we entered Jinja. We were to be the guests of an advocate, Shri Chandubhai Patel, an old student of mine at the Gujarat Vidyapith. Having an old student as one's host though very pleasant is not free from embarrassment. It might give the host a particular pleasure to put his best at the disposal of the guests and take joy in putting up with all discomforts, but how can the guest, however appreciative, help minding it ?

We now set off on our formal and ceremonial visit to the source of the Nile. We reached the place where the waters of Lake Victoria slip over the rocky ledge and give birth to the Nile. I hurried to dip my feet in the waters and cool them. I drank a mouthful and cooled my heart and for a moment became one with the soul of my surroundings

Had I been a Sanskrit poet, I would have burst forth into song in praise of the blessed dwellers of the Nile, the fish, the singing birds flying over the water, and the hippopotami lolling on its banks.

Memorial to Gandhiji

This spot had an irresistible attraction for me, because it was one of those sacred places where the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed.

The people of Jinja 'took advantage' of our presence there, and got me to lay the foundation-stone of a pillar which they have planned to erect as a memorial to Gandhiji.

On July 2, 1950, therefore, in the presence of a large gathering, I performed this ceremony. A large portrait of Gandhiji had been brought there for the occasion and I felt as though Gandhiji himself were looking at me. At the end of the Vedic ceremony I spoke a few words about Gandhiji's life and work, the seeds of which had been nurtured in Africa. Escaping from pressmen and photographers I walked down the grassy bank to the water's edge, and sitting on a rock, fixed my eyes on the flowing river and sank into a moment of deep meditation. And I had a sudden vision of the future. I saw people, men, women and children, from all parts of the world gathered together at this spot for a study of Gandhiji's life and principles and to contemplate on his ultimate sacrifice and to form the nucleus of a group dedicated to the establishment of worldwide brotherhood, irrespective of race, creed or colour. I sent a thought of brotherly greetings to all these pilgrims of the future.

XXIII

MORE ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THE NILE

The river Nile is made up of two branches — the White Nile and the Blue Nile. Near Jinja where I was standing is the source of the White Nile. The Blue Nile starts from another lake, in Abyssinia, known as Lake Tana. For millions of years these two branches have been flowing and giving of their waters to the birds, beasts and human beings living on their banks. But a thing is always "unknown" until a European discovers it! Neither can it be gainsaid. Others live beside the river, but if they do not bother to know where it comes from and whither it goes, the whole river cannot be said to be known to them.

Story in Puranas

Mr Speke was the first to succeed in tracing the source of the Nile and proving that the Nile that is born at Jinja from Lake Victoria is the Nile of Egypt.

This Mr Speke was in the service of the Government of India. He heard that the ancient Indians knew quite a lot about Egypt. He made inquiries and found that the Sanskrit Puranas told the story of the Nile as being born from the sweet water lake Amara-sar, not far from the Mountains of the Moon, due south of which was Mount Meru. He had a translation made of the relevant Sanskrit verses and on that basis he decided to go and look for the source of the Nile.

He went from Zanzibar to Kenya and thence to Uganda, where he found the sweet water lake and the

Nile river flowing out of it. He proved that this was the same river that flowed through Egypt. This discovery is hardly a hundred years old.

Africa really belongs to the various tribes living there. The Europeans knew very little about this continent. The Arabs and the Europeans went to the African coast, captured the sons of the soil and taking them to their own countries, sold them there as slaves. Even women and children were among the captured, but whoever thought of them as human beings!

Division of Africa

It occurred to some missionaries to save the souls of these "savages" by making them Christians. These zealous and fearless missionaries penetrated into the innermost jungles, where even the greedy traders dared not reach and, learning the dialects of the place, taught the people the Gospel in the indigenous languages.

Later on the rulers of Europe divided the continent of Africa between themselves. In this division, the rule followed was that the land "discovered" by a particular missionary should belong to the king of the country to which that missionary belonged. Once it so happened that the Rev. Mr Stanley asked the King of England for help in order to "discover" the country around the Congo river. The Parliament of England refused this help. Mr Stanley therefore went to the King of Belgium. King Leopold, being both greedy and enterprising, gave the necessary help. As a result of this, when the division was made this country of the Congo river went to Belgium!

Belgian Congo is almost as big as India in size. It would be an absolute understatement to say that a description of the cruelties practised on the natives

of the country by the whites in order to get rubber from there would make one's hair stand on end. Any man of sensitive feelings reading that description would feel his blood freezing in his veins. And yet the whites have managed to "civilize" the natives gradually. The latter now wear clothes, beautify their hair and drink alcohol. Most of them have become Christians.

Egypt and the Nile

We Indians have helped in the cultivation of cotton in Uganda, acquired estates and lands with the help of the rulers and earned some money. We, too, have "improved" the people of the country. By taking them on as assistants, we have trained them in tailoring, carpentry, masonry work, cooking, etc. We have taught them to "enjoy" the good things of life by setting up shops where they could buy Indian and foreign cloth and European liquor.

The importance of the river Nile to North-East Africa is as great, if not greater, than the importance of the Ganga to North-East India. Amongst the greatest civilizations of the ancient world is to be counted the Egyptian civilization. It has affected not only the history but also the religion of Europe. In some respects the civilization of ancient Egypt seems to have been very similar to the civilization of India which was based on the four *varnas* (orders of society). An echo of it can also be heard in Plato's conception of the ideal society. Christianity in its early days found an asylum in Egypt. But it found its main protection and encouragement in Europe. The asceticism and hard austerities carefully cultivated in Egypt were rejected by Europe after a comparatively short trial. A study of Egyptian history is necessary in order to uncover

the roots of European civilization, and that history owes its development to a great extent to the influence of the Nile

Town at the Source

It is significant that, just as the waters of a river go forward and cannot flow back towards the source, the civilization of Egypt could not reach Uganda. Had the people of Egypt come and settled round about Lake Victoria, perhaps the history of Africa and of the world might have been written differently.

Most of the rivers in India have their sources in mountainous and inaccessible places. So the rivers are small at their sources. Not only is the Nile broad at the source, but the factor which really detracts from the poetry of the place is that a town has developed here. The country in which our river Krishna and her four tributaries have their sources used to be remote, inaccessible and holy, sacred to pilgrim-saints who had erected there a temple to the Lord Shiva better known as Mahabaleshwar. But the English rulers turned that sacred land into a pleasure resort by making it a summer capital for the Government of Bombay.

And now the British in Uganda are planning to generate electricity by building a huge dam near the Owen Falls. It will be one of the most wonderful dams of the world. The power thus generated will serve not only Uganda but also Sudan and Egypt. It will help to grow more food and to fight famine ; it will harness incalculable energy for the service of humanity. And so one cannot but wish well by such an enterprise. And yet the heart feels a premonition of some vast and irreparable loss for which no prosperity will ever compensate. The Nile was a divine Mother, a goddess, and now she will become merely a milch cow.

Town of Jinja

Jinja is one of the towns enthusiastically developed by Europeans and Indians together. Being on the shores of a large lake, it has a considerable shipping trade with Kisumu, Mwanza and other towns. It has also become important because of its various institutions. After the electric power house is established here it would not be surprising if Jinja were to become one of the leading industrial towns of Africa.

An institution run by the women of Jinja seemed to be particularly alive and well managed. Various classes are held there for women and the organizers do not content themselves with just lending their names, as in many other institutions, but give of their personal service.

One day we went to see an institution for the Africans run by missionaries. The white teachers were all out as it was a Sunday. The African students showed us round the place, the dormitories and other buildings. The class-rooms were nicely furnished, as in all such missionary institutions, but it seemed to me that the food arrangements left much to be desired.

New Barons

The same day we went with Shri Muljibhai to see his estate and sugar factory at Kakira. These estates of the modern industrial magnates brought to mind the atmosphere of the Middle Ages when the baron overlord dwelt surrounded by his serfs and artisans. Muljibhai lives with his family in a palatial house on the top of a little hill. All around the hill are his factories and his fields of sugarcane, coffee and tea. There are also huts for the African workers and several bungalows for the officers working on the estate. The

whole arrangement was pleasing because there were no insurmountable barriers between the master and his workers

I heard that an African labourer made a brutal assault on Muljibhai once, but that was because the poor wretch was blind drunk, and not because he had been wronged in any way. Such accidents do happen sometimes even in the best regulated societies,

Muljibhai has founded a Commerce College for the Africans at very great expense. On the way from Kampala we had seen the building going up.

Africans' Status

There is a little village of Iganga some 35 miles from Jinja. Many Indians live there. We had been invited by them to dinner. Passing through forest country we reached Iganga at 9 p.m. Dinner was Gujarati, but served in the Western style. *I feel this is a welcome improvement which deserves to be universally copied.* Before sitting down to dinner, I asked whether there were any Africans among the guests. This had not occurred to anyone. Our people told us that they had no objection whatever to African friends dining with them at the table, but whom could they get hold of at this time of night?

All I could say was: "What a pity! But, of course, it can't be helped now."

Before the dinner started, however, they went and fetched an African teacher to have dinner with us. After dinner I spoke in Gujarati first but later spoke a little in English also so that the two or three African friends who had arrived could understand. At the end of the speech, the African friend said. "The English gave me education. I am grateful to them for many things they have done for me. But they never asked

us to eat at the same table with them. We have felt hurt about this. We have not been able to come very near your people either, in fact this is the first time in my life that I have dined with people of another race as an equal."

The effect on his mind of being treated as an equal touched me deeply. I felt that a wrong and misplaced orthodoxy was destroying the humanity in our people by creating barriers between them and the people of the country where they had settled.

Indians' Attitude

The English are here as rulers. They have an idea of colour superiority. They are also convinced of the superiority of their civilization. Their aloofness is of a different sort. Our social stand-offishness is different. It is not racial. There is a religious taboo behind it. There is an effort in it to keep a stranger at arm's length and there certainly is a sense of superiority also. Until we get rid of this age-old fault of ours, we shall never be able to make a permanent home in a foreign land. And we shall no longer be able to keep up all this 'touch-me-not' orthodoxy even in our own country. There may be some difficulties in interdining because of the great difference between vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet. But it should not be beyond our power to find a way out. The first thing is to have a will to do it.

The English have no objection to eating food cooked by the Africans; only they do not sit at table with them. Until quite recently we did not even eat food cooked by the Africans. Now we are outgrowing those prejudices and many Indian houses have African cooks. Having dined in many Indian homes all over

East Africa, I am convinced that the African is an efficient cook. I have seen them cook the special dishes of Gujarat, Maharashtra and even Konkan as well as our own people can make them. '

Equality Necessary

I have seen African servants looking after our children most carefully and lovingly. Where our merchants have trusted them, the Africans have proved themselves to be good and trustworthy shop assistants, and in some places our people have even trusted them to run branch shops giving them a certain percentage of the profits in addition to their pay. It is not only to our definite advantage to keep the Africans in our homes and at our work as equals, but it is necessary to do so for our moral salvation also.

It was very late returning from Iganga. The moon was shedding its silvery light everywhere. Our muffled prayers flowed into it. Dreaming of a glorious racial and cultural synthesis of three continents, we reached home and bed at midnight.

XXIV

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

The East African tour as originally planned was nearing completion. It now remained only to visit the manor house of Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas, whose friendly insistence had made this trip possible. But plans have a tendency to lengthen themselves.

All our hosts in East Africa said to us, "Since you have come so far, why not see Ruanda-Urundi in Belgian Congo? It is a most beautiful country." Having studied the maps of that country, I was eager to see lakes like Bunyoni and Kivu, to visit the northern end of the famous lake Tanganyika, long and narrow like a chilli, to see some of the extinct or sleeping volcanoes and to travel through deep forests. People had tempted us also with the promise of the sight of wild animals. Making a careful budget of our time, therefore, we accepted gladly the suggestions of friends.

Meetings and Partings

This necessitated many changes in our party. Appasaheb had already returned to Nairobi. Now his secretary Shri Inamdar also left, and Shri Mohanrao Shahane of the Servants of India Society and his wife Yamulai joined our party. Kamalnayan's wife Savitri and his two children left for Nairobi to take the plane for India. Nanjibhai's son Dhirubhai was leaving for Europe. So July 3 and 4 were days of meetings and partings.

We left Jinja for Lugazi, which we reached within an hour. Shri Dhirubhai and Anandjibhai

showed us round the whole estate. There is a certain similarity between Kakira and Lugazi. On top of a hill there are two palatial mansions, one old and the other new, showing the difference of taste of two generations. At the foot of it cluster the houses of the responsible officers of the estate. And at the edge of the fields that stretch for miles in all directions are the quarters of the African labourers. Satisfactory arrangements are made to look after their health and sanitation. There is also provision for the education of the children. The officers here come from all provinces of India. There were some Englishmen also among the employees.

It is a pity that owing to shortage of man-power, it has not been possible to get the full produce of the land. The Government does not allow outside labour to come in, and it is not possible to get the necessary number of labourers locally. Where seven thousand hands are needed the Government allows only four thousand ; with the result that even all the sugar-cane that is grown cannot be crushed and is left to wither and rot in the fields.

Crossing the Equator

Our new or supplementary journey started from Kampala. Two friends of Dr. Muljibhai, Shri Khimji-bhai and Shri Vrajlalbhai Shah, decided to go with us. Without them our trip would not have been half as comfortable. Their ability was matched only by their modesty. They had bought a fine new car which they were using for the first time on this trip. I must say that we made the fullest use of this car. Kamalnayan drove it for the greater part of the journey. I could see that he had just the right balance between dash and caution that makes a successful driver.

The very first day we reached a spot which was of no importance to the inhabitants of the place. But all of us became rather excited, for we had reached the equator. There we were with one foot in the Southern Hemisphere and the other in the Northern. The Government has put up a signpost here on the roadside, with the right arm pointing to the Northern Hemisphere and the left arm to the Southern Hemisphere. Grouping ourselves about that signpost, we had some snaps taken, as if the record of this mighty deed of ours should be preserved for posterity.

As we had to go forward, we tore ourselves away from that romantic spot

Old Student

Stopping at Masakka just for lunch we went on to Mbarara. We spent the night at a hotel which had rooms shaped like the round huts of the Africans, scattered on a hillside. These round huts were more romantic than comfortable. But spending a night in them made us feel as if we were experiencing something of the real Africa. As the appellate court was sitting here for a couple of days, a Gujarati advocate who had come up from Masakka said as soon as he met me, "I am from the village of Bhadran and used to be your student in the Gujarat Vidyapith. My name is Ravjibhai Patel." It was a pleasure to meet him there and we talked of many things. I specially asked him about the habits and traits of the African, what are the crimes usually committed by them, their marriage customs, their laws of inheritance, etc.

The people here being far from big towns like Kampala, Entebbe, etc are supposed to be backward and for that very reason it is here that one can see real Africa. The next day we had a warm comfortable

bath but the colour of the water was as if it was boiled iron-rust.

Going down from the hotel, I addressed a meeting near a little Sikh temple where our people, men and women, had gathered

Town of Kabale

There are many beautiful places in Africa but Kabale stands out as one of the most beautiful. After 90 miles of road, full of many ups and downs, we reached Kabale at 5 in the evening. On the way we saw many beautiful sights but as it often happens when too much is crammed into a short space of time, it is difficult to remember a single clear picture. The only thing I can recall at the moment is the terrible sight of a huge lorry completely overturned by the side of the road. We heard that three persons had been killed in the accident. Thinking back upon it now, I feel that it was a precursor of the terrible stream of destructive lava which we were to see three or four days later.

All arrangements were made here for our stay at the White Horse Inn. It is built on one of the most beautiful sites with a glorious view of grassy mountains and valleys.

Kabale is 6,400 ft above the sea level. Besides being beautiful and invigorating, it is one of the more important towns because people around here are said to be hard-working and efficient than other Africans. Every hill made this fact self-evident. These hardy people have cultivated even the most difficult bits of land with grit and perseverance. Not only are they self-supporting in the matter of food, but are even able to supply it to the people around.

Morning Walk

Before the others were awake the next morning, Saroj and I set out for a walk. We started with high hopes but at first there was nothing but an all-enveloping white sea of mist. We walked on, hoping for the sun to come to our rescue and reveal to us the beautiful landscape which we were so longing to see. In the beginning, however, the mist seemed to become thicker, and even when a glimpse was had of the hills they appeared unreal and like something in a dream. At last the sun triumphed and the mist was pushed lower and lower into the valley until it disappeared and the hills stood revealed — a fascinating reality.

After lunch we went to see the lovely lake Bunyoni. A steam launch had been arranged to take us round the lake. But it refused to budge. Tiring of it, we hired a row-boat and went on the lake. This shamed the launch into the semblance of an effort. But it was a very short-lived effort and the launch stopped again like a vicious horse. Some of us left the capricious launch and went back to the boat. Others, more patient, stuck to the launch and their loyalty was rewarded. They were able to make a trip far into the lake, while we went off in our little boat to see the exquisite blue lotuses which are the pride of lake Bunyoni.

The poets of India have sung of the lotus as being “of flowers the undisputed queen.”

Most lotuses are either white or red. Both have a beauty of their own. The white lotus is an emblem of purity. The red one of romance and love.

Blue lotuses are comparatively rare and they indicate poetry and serenity. There is something ethereal

about them which haunts you. We gathered a sheaf of these lotuses and made bracelets out of the long stems

Swahili Language

That evening Mr Russel, a Government officer, very kindly came to see us. In the course of conversation we learnt that the Swahili language is understood in most parts of East Africa, and that the opposition to it is for the most part artificial. We also learnt from Mr Russel that on an island in the middle of lake Bunyoni, there is a colony for lepers run by missionaries. It is one of the best run leper colonies, and is well worth a visit.

At the meeting arranged by the Hindu Mandal of Kabale there were many Africans also. So I addressed most of my remarks to them, my English talk being translated sentence by sentence by an English-knowing African. After the speech there were questions and answers. The interpreter suddenly refused to translate one of the questions and turning to the English officer asked, "Can such a question be asked of the guests?"

"Why not ask the guest himself?" was the reply. I insisted on knowing. "No matter what the question is, please translate it into English for me. I shall know how to manage the answer."

Inter-Racial Marriages

One question was: "Men of your country occasionally marry our girls; why should not your girls marry us?" Another question was: "Your people 'marry' our girls but do not look after the progeny. Why don't you take them to India with you?"

I could see that there was a certain amount of bitterness behind these questions. I was glad that the

Indians did not get upset on hearing these questions. One Gujarati resident got up and said : "Kakasaheb, please tell these people that if our girls want to marry them we shall have no objection. But surely no one can force anyone to marry any particular person ?"

I said, "I have nothing against inter-racial marriages. But the question is a delicate one, I would not therefore preach in favour of such marriages today. People of three continents have come together in Africa. It is enough, at present, if they learn to understand and respect each other and try to develop a common social life."

"Now as regards your question about the Indo-African progeny, I can say that now 30 or 40 of your students are studying in India. If they marry and settle there, we shall certainly look after their children that are born in our country."

My answer seemed to please both sides. But I started thinking furiously. We, in India, have made innumerable experiments through the ages, in the matter of race relations. We successfully overcame the colour bar, by giving a new functional connotation to the word *Varna*—that is colour. We recognized inter-marriages but discouraged women marrying men of an "inferior" race. We called it *Prati-Loma*—that is "against the grain". This led to a self-respecting movement amongst the people of the "inferior" race and inter-marriages were stopped. We tried the favourite method of racial segregation, and gave it a religious sanction. This policy recoiled on us and we had to suffer heavily. All progress was stopped, solidarity destroyed, and a precarious harmony could be established only on the basis of ignorance and fatalism.

We have now boldly decided to abolish the social distinctions of high and low. We shall have now to overcome the distinction between compatriots and foreigners. We can rest only when the spirit of human brotherhood flows freely without any let or hindrance.

XXV

IN A NEW COUNTRY

Now we were ready and eager to enter the most beautiful country in East Africa. Our breakfast was made all the more enjoyable because the kind landlady had beautifully arranged on our table the lovely blue lotuses which we had brought from Lake Bunyoni the previous evening. We drove away from Kabale with Lake Bunyoni spreading on the right. To enjoy the beauty of a lake to the full one must either glide all over it in a boat or climb on a hill-top to take in the beauty of its shining surface. Our poet-saint Valmiki has compared the clear waters of a lake to the pure heart of a saint !

I wondered when a great poet would arise and sing of Lake Bunyoni

Bamboo Forest

After a while the terraced hills were left behind, and we entered a bamboo forest. I have enjoyed from earliest childhood the beauty of bamboos, growing like green fountains, a delight to the eyes. From the point of view of utility the bamboo is a friend to the poor, for it provides him with artistic and inexpensive pillars, walls, roofs, mats, utensils, musical instruments, and even vegetable and condiments if a little trouble is taken. No wonder that I was

overjoyed at the sight of bamboos galore. The various places where I had seen such bamboo forests, from Ceylon to Assam, came vividly to my mind and enriched the experience I was having.

In the afternoon we reached Kisoro or Kisolo. Here the British jurisdiction ended and we entered the country called Ruanda-Urundi which is mandated under Belgian Congo. Three changes brought this home to us. Now the car had to be driven on the right instead of the left of the road. If this rule is forgotten the most terrible accidents are likely to result.

Secondly, there were metres instead of miles, one kilometre being approximately five furlongs. And lastly, as soon as we entered this part of the country, we had to put our watches back by an hour. We were by now almost in the centre of Africa. Later when we had to buy something we found that we had to deal in francs instead of shillings. This meant the addition and subtraction of huge sums, which made us feel dreadfully extravagant.

Mountain Road

Even on this border we met a Gujarati young man, Shri Chhaganlal Shah, who was the customs officer. He was extremely helpful in every way. He lent us a very good map which was of help to us throughout the trip. The local Gujarati merchants refused to let us proceed before we had done justice to the lunch they had prepared with generous hospitality.

Whenever the road curved, we found little plants placed in the centre of it for the regulation of the traffic. Sometimes wooden stumps were set up instead in order to avoid accidents.

Since the morning we had been climbing higher and higher. At last we came to a plateau. It was no mean feat to drive along at the height of 8,000 or 8,500 feet. We began to feel quite proud of the greatest height we had so far achieved in East Africa.

But pride always mounts high before a fall! As merchants often lose the money made in a war-boom, so did we suddenly lose most of the laboriously gained height in a few dazed moments after we had passed through what is called the Great Gap.

Hot Springs

Turning north, we reached the outskirts of Rutshuru. Being eager to reach the Ruindi National Park, we hurriedly crossed the Rutshuru river which forms a link between Lake Edward and Lake Bunyoni. We had so far seen the National Parks at Nairobi and at Amboseli. Then again near the salt water lake of Maniara, on our way to Ngorongoro, we had seen countless animals. But where could we find such richness of wild life as in the forests of Ruindi! From the moment we entered the National Park, we were filled with expectancy. If we looked to the left, we were afraid of missing some animal on the right and *vice versa*. So our heads kept turning from side to side every minute.

All along the road there were notices both in French and English warning tourists that it was dangerous to leave the cars. But it was impossible to keep inside when we saw hot springs gushing out of the earth on the right. We went down to the springs and were almost overpowered by a strong smell! I was surprised to see something that looked like green moss under boiling water which had collected in a hole. Looking around I felt sure that this part of the

country also is part of a rift. As we got back to the car and were about to start off, the car behind us came up at great speed and we were told that an elephant had looked as if it would attack the car and so they had thought it best to beat a hasty retreat. They told us also not to linger. As a matter of fact, I have not heard of an elephant pursuing man for any distance. He only attacks if a man goes near and annoys him or if he gets enraged by the stink of a human being.

Ruindi Camp

It was getting dark when we reached Ruindi camp in the Albert National Park. Enclosed by a low stone wall stands a hotel and some round African huts, well laid out in two rows. Each was furnished with beds, etc. *The electric dynamo worked for a few hours at night.* On the entrances of the camp were arranged huge skulls of elephants. From the veranda of the hotel could be seen some wild buffaloes grazing in the distant meadows. The wild buffalo is the most dangerous of beasts possessing less brains and more viciousness than any other animal of the forest.

We wanted to drive in the forest at night as we had done in Amboseli, but we were told that no one was allowed to go out of the camp before 8 in the morning.

Too disappointed to do anything else, we quietly went to bed.

Although each day contains 24 hours, it appears long or short according to the number and quality of experiences which are packed into it. During the whole of the African trip, there could not have been more than four or five days spent in looking at wild animals. We had not gone to them to solve any of their problems or to benefit them in any way. We may have

caused them a little inconvenience, but that they were used to.

Wild Buffaloes

On July 8 we strolled out of our hut before sunrise, and long before it was time to start out in the cars. We wanted to see the sunrise in the westernmost part of our journey. The beautiful red colours in the eastern sky made it impossible for us to sit still. We set out for a walk just as the sun appeared on the horizon. It was exciting to see the sun come up here, on the other side of the equator. Lost in this glorious sight, I started walking faster and faster, not realizing that we were going a long way away from the camp. Wishing to draw my attention to this fact without damping my mood, Saroj asked with a smile: "Have you an urgent appointment with the lions, Kakasaheb?" With a laugh I woke up from my reverie and what should I see but four well-fed wild buffaloes just a few yards away from us! We stared at them with surprise and curiosity. They also turned and stared with the same curiosity and surprise at us. For a moment each party tried to gauge the intentions of the other. In such moments are peace and war determined. We maintained a calm, friendly and *ahimsak* (non-aggressive) gaze. They too ceased to look hostile. After this long and steady interchange of glances, they returned to their grazing and we hurried back to the camp.

Once before, on the way to Ngorongoro by car, we had seen a *bhogo* (wild buffalo) at close quarters, but that was in the dark in the unsatisfactory glare of our headlights. Seeing them here in the blazing sunlight was quite different and ever so much more excitingly satisfying.

With this good omen our day began

Hippos and Boars

We started off with an *askari* (armed forester) in each car, and with the tanks of our cars filled to the brim. We covered miles and miles without seeing a single animal and then we saw one, quite far away. One could not tell at that distance whether it was a *tembo* (elephant) or a *faru* (rhino). As we got nearer, we saw that it was neither. It was a huge hippopotamus. Later we saw a rhino and various other animals. An elephant was having a high old time flinging dust over his head. Later we saw wild boars with two curving tusks, like brackets, thrusting fiercely out of the sides of their mouths.

So far we had not seen many hippos, as they are rather scarce in Nairobi. Here we saw so many of them, especially in a stream at one end of this park where they lay happily wallowing in the mud and water, that we were completely satisfied. The stream was crowded with these half-submerged animals, floating about and almost touching one another! The hippos on the further shore of the stream seemed to be more active and playful. We stood there for minutes watching their frolic. I noticed that a white bird was also watching their antics perched on the top of a tall tree on the opposite bank.

Lord of the Jungle

We had told our *askaris* that we were really keen to see the full-maned African lions not as easily seen as the other animals. The *askaris* were, therefore, keeping a sharp lookout for the *simba* (lions). Suddenly both of them called out "Simba! Simba! Simba!" pointing to a clearing in a thicket about two or three furlongs away.

At first we could see nothing at all, but the *askuris* insisted that there was a huge *simba* there. Gradually we succeeded in seeing something that looked like a heap of dust in the grass. Looking through our binoculars, we saw the heap moving. And as we looked, we made out the grand shape of a lion sitting at lordly ease ! As it was impossible for the cars to negotiate and go any nearer we had to content ourselves with this distant glimpse. As we were turning away, Sharad Pandya called out : " Look ! the lion has got up ! " I turned in time to see through the binoculars the lion moving away with regal dignity.

After wandering about in the forest seeing all kinds of antelopes and monkeys and other creatures, specially the elephants, and fully satisfied at last, we decided to return to the camp. Our car was leading. Suddenly we came to a dead stop. In front of us appeared a herd of about 100 to 150 wild buffaloes crossing the track. It was a critical moment. Those animals could have smashed both our cars to smithereens had they wished to do so. They did not look too friendly either.

The only thing to do was to sit absolutely quiet. When they saw that we were not going to attack them, they formed a phalanx of the hugest big-horned male buffaloes facing us — a truly formidable sight ! Behind this living wall, the females and the young ones crossed over safely. Only when their wards had reached a safe distance on the right did these doughty defenders break their rank and cross over. Making sure that not a single animal remained on the left, we started off and drove away at full speed. Luckily there were no ditches on the way, the engine did not give out, nor did we meet an elephant.

XXVI

THE LOVELY LAKE KIVU

From Rutshuru we went to Goma, where we first saw the beautiful Lake Kivu. Not far from Goma is the little idyllic town of Kisenyi nestling near the lake.

From Rutshuru to Goma the road lay through such thick jungle that the presence of the road there was a constant source of wonder. All along the way little golden yellow butterflies kept flying across the road. There is another big National Park around here. It is said that at one end of this park live huge gorillas. Between the hills there was the deeper green of the coffee plantations, and now and then fields of tiny, snow-white perethrium flowers reminded one of dark, moonless skies thick with stars. The Government has encouraged the cultivation of these flowers as they yield a very useful insecticide powder.

Town of Kisenyi

The Government have also planted many cinchona trees in this part of the country. This beautiful journey ended as we reached the pretty townlet of Goma. The top of the hill of Goma affords an enchanting view of the vast expanse of Lake Kivu. The houses here are also very pretty.

Had it not been for its rival Kisenyi nearby, Goma would have kept on increasing in importance. In Kisenyi there are pretty houses, good roads, all kinds of attractive flowers, and boating on the lake. Tall trees add a touch of grandeur to all this beauty.

We stayed in Hotel Bugoyi run by a lady who, though a White Russian originally, had become a naturalized French woman. In this "guest house"

there are little round huts most comfortably furnished. The landlady knows many European languages. She had once spent a few months in Calcutta. The day after our arrival some European officers were invited to meet us. They knew only French. I said all I had to say in English while our kind hostess translated it into French, sentence by sentence.

A Live Volcano

Not far from Kisenyi is a live volcano. There was not time enough to go right up to it, so we had to content ourselves with going out after dark and seeing the glowing peak. It looked like a huge ghost of a giant with fire on its head. The flames lit up the sky with a ruby glow.

I believe there are two or three such volcanoes in Africa. All the rest are either extinct or latent. On almost every hill there is to be found a deep crater. Such volcanoes are not merely a part of the beauties of nature for me, but in them I get a glimpse of the manifestation of the Almighty. That evening the lake had played an important part in our prayers, so the next morning when we prayed again at the same beautiful spot on the bank of the river, the live volcano was also present together with our old companion the lake. Indeed, it is only through prayer that the oneness between "living" and "dead" matter can be experienced.

A visit to the local market proved to be very interesting. Hawkers sold all kinds of coloured cloth and other things, both indigenous and foreign. Young African maidens were decked out in colourful clothes and cheap ornaments. Old women were all dressed in completely African style. They were genuine representatives of the ancient African culture.

After being photographed with these Africans, we drove round the town seeing the lake from all angles. Then we again went up to Goma, and admired the view from the hill-top to our heart's content.

Road over Lava

Now started our journey round Lake Kivu. From Goma we turned to the south, keeping the lake on our left, climbing up and going down the hills, the road taking us away from the lake sometimes, and sometimes bringing us very close. Every new glimpse of the lake made it all the more precious to us for having lost it for a while.

A little further on we saw a place where a volcano had erupted just two or two and a half years ago (in 1948). The burning lava had come down with such force that a huge volume of it had rushed into the lake, cutting off a part of it completely. The sight of the coal-black glistening cold lava conjured up an awful vision of burning waves after implacable waves of shining lava rushing along, crinkling up before they had time to congeal, at places forming whirlpools and eddies and breaking up into thousands of cracks, big and small. The whole scene was terrible and depressing beyond words. No plant or stone or even ordinary dust was to be seen anywhere—nothing but black dead lava and our poor road winding through it.

Saddened, we continued our journey. A little further on we saw a similar sight. In 1938 there had been another such onrush of lava upon Lake Kivu, but the sunlight, rain and winds of twelve years had reduced this mass to powder. In many places earth had collected on it, and where this earth had regained its sovereignty, little green plants had already started

flaunting their standards. An exalting conviction came to us. No matter how terrible and devastating death and destruction may be, they are always defeated by Life. Destruction is cataclysmic but temporary, while life is quiet, gentle, abiding and eternal.

As it was getting dark, we reached the fairytown of Costermansville, originally known as Bukafu.

Stars are burning globes of fire of such intense heat that everything on them melts into a gaseous state. Yet how cooling is the light of these very stars after it has travelled millions of miles to reach us! Our world also is full of such wonders. All the mountains and lakes and rift-valleys are due to terrible volcanic outbursts in the distant past. But how peaceful and enchanting they are today! Lake Kivu is 4,829 feet above sea-level. It is one of the highest lakes in the world. As I have mentioned before, the volcanoes nearby seem to be particularly friendly with this lake and often stretch out their long burning arms to play with its waters.

In very ancient times, no one can tell when, a volcano must have erupted in this way and sent its lava rushing into the lake in the form of a big hill. Green trees gradually shot up on this hill. In due time men went and settled there, and so the village of Bukafu was born. How could such a lovely site escape the notice of the Europeans? Excellent climate, cool waters, beautiful scenery and a convenient harbour — seeing these advantages, they converted Bukafu into the present Costermansville. There could hardly be a smaller and more beautiful little town in Central Africa. This was also the westernmost point of our African tour. It is situated at nearly 28 degrees latitude.

Even in a luxury hotel, it was difficult for strict vegetarians like us to get a square meal. They were completely bewildered at the number of things we refused to eat, all the more so as there were varying degrees of vegetarianism even in our small party. The hotel people simply could not imagine how (and why) we managed to exist ! They felt they certainly had nothing they could offer to such eccentric guests.

Morning Walk

Early in the morning Saroj came to take me for a walk before the rest of our companions were awake. Walking down to the lake we saw only a few Africans plying their little wooden boats. They gazed at us in amazement, not being able to understand why anyone not driven by poverty should wake up so early ! Walking between the stately trees, we came to a palatial building. In a corner, on a wooden post in the garden was placed a tiny statue of Mother Mary. Making our obeisance to her, we went down the broad steps to the lake once more and contemplated the beauty of the still expanse of water.

After a drive round the city with our companions, we left the town. Lake Kivu is 62 miles long, while the length of Lake Tanganyika is 450 miles. There is also a difference of about 1,300 feet in their levels. A beautiful river, Ruzizi starting from the southern side of Lake Kivu jumps, frolics and meanders into the northernmost end of Lake Tanganyika. How swift must be the flow of a river which has to descend 1,300 feet in eighty miles ! We saw the source of this Ruzizi river at Costermansville.

XXVII

RIVER RUZIZI AND LAKE TANGANYIKA

There is a tall bridge right at the spot where the river Ruzizi leaps out of Lake Kivu. With what eagerness did we hasten there ! For the source of a river is the quintessence of romance and poetry. But on reaching there, our joy changed to sadness in one moment.

A big, fat, glossy cow must have been walking across the bridge. A lorry must have come headlong from the opposite side. The cow must have rushed to the edge of the bridge to save its life. Deciding that it was better to be dashed on the rocks beneath rather than be crushed by the bus, it must have tried to jump into the stream below. But one of its hoofs got caught somehow in two sheets of steel on the side of the bridge. The animal hung there by its hind foot in a piteous condition. Who can tell what tortures it had to bear before it found release in death ! When we reached there, it hung motionless with its face towards the river below. It was a terribly saddening sight ! !

Road Safety Plan

Now our way lay in the same direction as that of the Ruzizi river, right down to its mouth. There was no question of going along its bank. Climbing several hills and coming down again, we made our way along very rough roads, occasionally catching sight of the Ruzizi. This road provided a good test of the driving ability of Shri Kamalnayan. He proved himself an excellent driver !

In certain places there is one-way traffic for some distance on a narrow and dangerous part of the mountainous road. There are no telephones here to inform people at the other end how many cars have passed through and how far they have reached. So forest people are stationed at corners to convey the necessary information in their primitive ways. At convenient places huge barrels or drums are kept. Beating on them as on drums, the information is conveyed to a certain distance. Thence it is relayed further by another set of similar drums. This aboriginal method helps to keep the modern motorist safe!

Descending the hill in this way, we came to flat and wide countryside. We were surprised to see a tiny railway running along the side of the river. This railway collects the products of the fertile Ruzizi valley, and conveys them from the Luvungi station up to Uvira. From there they are taken by steamers to Kigoma, Albertville, and even down south to Kasanga. From Kigoma a railway runs right up to Dar-es-Salaam.

Coming down from the hill, we felt almost the same joy as travellers like Speke or Burton must have felt when they first caught a glimpse of Lake Tanganyika. About a couple of miles before reaching the harbour of Uvira, our road took a turn to the left. This road ran along the northern coast of Lake Tanganyika. The road is not much higher than the level of the water. A rise of a few feet in the level of the water would completely submerge the road.

A Deep Lake

After crossing a few small streamlets, we reached the main big bridge on the Ruzizi. In the morning we had made a sad start from the source of this river. It

delighted us to see her emptying herself into this lake. The river was rushing joyously to the lake which was receiving her with a calm and sparkling joy

We reached Usumbura in the evening. This was the southernmost point of our trip in Ruanda Urundi. This town is at the foot of a mountain on the shore of a very long lake. As this lake is the result of a prehistoric rift, it is much deeper than an ordinary lake, at one point reaching the depth of 3,190 feet. Geologists say that at one time there was not much difference in the levels of Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika. This lake gives of its waters to the Lukuga river in the south, as it takes them from the river Ruzizi.

We spent a day and a half in Usumbura. Our host's daughter-in-law turned out to be an old acquaintance whom I had met many years ago in Karachi. It was a pleasure to give a second autograph in far-off Usumbura to the same young lady who had demanded one from me as a school-girl in Karachi!

Old Acquaintances

Our host, Shri Juthabhai, has been settled here for many years. His daughter had been one of our hostesses in Zanzibar. All this made us feel like members of the family rather than mere guests. Here we met a schoolmaster named Niranjan Bhatt. He seemed to know a great deal about Africa. He had read much on the subject. It is a pity that such people do not write and explain to us the life of the natives of this continent. What a pity that persons like Mr Bhatt are not only not appreciated, but people are careless enough to lose the carefully collected literature he entrusts to their care!

We visited the school and the zoo, also attended a large and rather formal party to which the local

European officers had been invited. I had several talks with our own people in which I emphasized, as usual, the need of mixing with everyone freely and of serving the people in whose country we lived and prospered.

When we left Usumbura at 6-30 a.m. everything was looking lovely. The Government have paid special attention to the roads herabouts. Passing through hilly country, the road has a steep mountain on one side and a deep valley on the other. There is always a danger of cars going over into the valley. During the rains, the road is apt to get washed away. To prevent this catastrophe tall and straight growing trees are closely planted near the edge of the road. Not only do their roots hold the earth in place, but they also add to the beauty and grandeur of the place.

The winding road took us so high that even fairly big mountains looked like little hillocks in the valley below. The terraced cultivation on the slopes of the hills looked fascinating. People seemed to have made the best possible use of the streams flowing in the valley.

Mineral Water Springs

Having lunched at Astrida we went on, passing Nyanza and Kubgaye, which latter is a big centre of missionary activity. Leaving the main road here, we took the beautiful but dangerous road to Ruhengeri. Here we stopped for rest and refreshment at the place of a Gujarati merchant, Shri Popatbhai. I was glad to learn that this enterprising businessman had trained several Africans at his shop, and after making sure of their honesty and ability had put them in charge of branch shops with a certain per cent share in the profits, in addition to their basic salaries. These shops are running satisfactorily.

Quite near this place are springs of cold, sparkling mineral water. I do not remember ever having tasted better soda-water anywhere.

It was getting late and we had to reach Kabale before we could rest for the night. In the twilight we passed three extinct volcanoes standing in a line : the Muhavura, the Sabinio and the Gahinga. It became quite dark by the time we had passed through the valley at the foot of one of them.

At last the customs barrier was reached. Our watches were put forward one hour ; the cars, used by now to running on the right of the road, were again kept to the left, and we reached Kabale at about ten at night with a sigh of relief. Had we not negotiated the wild road through pitchy darkness without any mishap ! Having done justice to the dinner which our good landlady had carefully prepared and kept for us, we sank into sweet and dreamless slumber.

XXVIII

FROM KABALE TO KAMPALA

The return journey along the very road which one has travelled by, does not by any means lack its own peculiar charm. Each landmark is rich with old associations ; and there is the joy of expectation satisfied, when we again see a thing of beauty. The whole view is differently interesting, because it is now seen from a different and opposite angle.

The return trip was, moreover, enlivened by Shrimatī Yamunabai Shahane, whose keen and inquiring mind raised topics for discussion with refreshing zest and animation. We discussed social and political

problems of Maharashtra, although we were far away at the western end of East Africa.

The even course of our motor journey was marred, towards the close, by a mishap to our car. We had to divide ourselves into two parties. The one that went ahead had the good fortune of visiting the Murchusson Falls.

At Masaka

We who preferred to remain behind, out of loyalty to the sick car, had a trying time which was relieved by getting interesting information regarding local affairs — educational and otherwise.

The next day we stopped for a few hours at Masaka. People of this place justifiably feel neglected because most of the tourists on their way to Ruanda Urundi just make a convenience of the place stopping for a meal and then rushing on. I, therefore, decided to give a better account of ourselves. The Indian population of the town gathered at an hour's notice at the local cinema. At the end of my talk, there were the usual questions and answers. The Muslim portion of the audience was particularly pleased.

At Kampala we spent a Sunday in paying off old debts and carrying out old resolutions. We found time to go up the hill and see the mosque there, which had attracted our attention on the day we first entered Kampala. We enjoyed some good Indian music in the Maharashtra Mandal. This visit to the Mandal was long overdue. I was very happy to meet the people of my province in far off Kampala.

Visit to Lugasi

We had now spent more than two months in touring round the major part of East Africa. We felt that we had reached the saturation point and wanted to

recapitulate what we had seen rather than add fresh fields and pastures new to our itinerary. We decided, therefore, to spend four days at Lugasi at Shri Nanjibhai's manor house. I wanted to spend about a week there, but I had accepted an invitation to go to Nairobi to open the new offices of the Commissioner to the Government of India. So we made the best of our four days at Lugasi. I wrote down some of my travel impressions. Lugasi is a beautiful place. The hilltop is crowned with two houses. One which is comparatively old, small and simple expresses the simple tastes of a self-made man. The other is new, large and very modern. One can easily make out that it is the residence of fortunate sons of a wealthy father.

We stayed in the smaller of the two mansions and devoted ourselves to writing except for the mornings and evenings when we refreshed ourselves with sparkling draughts of lovely sunrise and sunset made vocal by sweet bird-music.

Life of Service

One day Anandjibhai, who was so kindly looking after us, introduced to us an old missionary doctor, who had spent his whole life in service. Dr. Hunter had spent his younger days with his father in my own town of Belgaum in India. It was a pleasure to hear from him old reminiscences. He was 72 when we met and had recently lost his wife and son. He was still busy looking after the health of the African workers at Lugasi.

I could not help admiring the energy and devotion of this old man. "It is better," he replied in his quiet way, "to wear away rather than to rust." I was really grateful to Shri Anandjibhai for arranging this visit.

On my return to India I learnt that Dr. Hunter had passed away to join his wife and son. But what sweet and inspiring memories he has left behind him !

It was at Lugasi that I decided not to go to Egypt but rather return to India *via* Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia. My decision to abandon the trip to Egypt surprised many friends. But I thought that the culture of Egypt was entirely different from that of Africa south of the Sahara. The problems there were also of a totally different character. Large numbers of Indians have made East Africa their home. It was essential that as an Indian, I should study the condition of our people in that part of the country.

Egyptian Culture

Egypt has inherited one of the most ancient cultures of the world. China, India and Egypt have got many things to teach the world in the matter of social experiments. I thought I should visit Egypt separately with a fresh mind, after making a careful study of its ancient and modern history.

The life-story of the river Nile is, in itself, a romantic study. The story of the Pyramids, the tradition of the famous university of Al Azhar, the early history of Christianity in Egypt, the contact of the West since the days of Napoleon — all these have made the culture of Egypt rich and composite. One must refresh one's knowledge of all these before visiting this pivotal country, which is geographically at the centre of three continents. One must prepare oneself before one visits the magnificent and unique museum of Cairo.

When I shall ever be able to make all these preparations and go to Egypt I really do not know. It is not a belief in fate but the experience of a life-time which

has given me a conviction that one can only do as much as one is meant to, and that any disregarding of one's limitations leads to no benefits.

XXIX

THE ESSENCE

The eleven days we finally spent in Nairobi were the very essence of our whole African trip. They were full to capacity of experiences, impressions, fresh and valuable information, new acquaintances and work

It was as if everything that East Africa had given me was given again in a highly concentrated tabloid form in those eleven days . Study of the structure of the land , the enjoyment of nature in the form of waterfalls, lakes, gardens etc ; visits to the National Park to see the wild animals , trips to villages , visits to the hospitable homes of African chiefs ; study of the African people, their arts and crafts, their dances, their national characteristics, their ambitions ; visits to institutions run by our people , discussions on the Hindu-Muslim question and chalking out for our people a course of work to be done on reaching India ; a study of our cultural problems ; friendships with Maharashtrians, and a glimpse of their rather impressive efficiency and capacity for work ; visits to institutions run by the missionaries, and a realization of the far-reaching policy underlying them ; the educational activities of the Agakhanis and the Arya Samajis ; discussions regarding suitable literature for the Africans and the spread of Khadi and the spinning-wheel among them ; and friendly talks with dear

friends I still feel that I must have lived a year in those eleven days.

Theosophical Society

On my first evening in Nairobi I was invited to speak at the Theosophical Lodge. It is always pleasant to meet people who have thoughts beyond mere wealth and pleasure. People like Shri Master in Mombasa, Shri Jayantilal Dwarkadas Shah in Dar-es-Salaam, and Shri Shivabhai Amin and Shri Behramji in Nairobi have tried to create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to spiritual growth. Such people are not usually found in the centre of social, economic and political life. They keep themselves on the fringe of it and create an atmosphere of unselfishness and devotion by canalizing the good impulses of people.

It is strange indeed that in a country where our people have built so many big high schools, hospitals, town halls as also temples, gurudwaras and mosques, the Theosophical Society should not have anywhere a building of its own. Is this activity lacking in spirit, or is it too spiritual for the common man? One can see that it is an activity which means much to the thinking portion of middle-class people, and gives them real consolation.

Somehow I feel that the failure of this activity to evoke any substantial response is due to the fact that it does not call upon man to give up his ease and comfort and rise to heights of selflessness and sacrifice.

A few earnest people had gathered in a small room in a private house. As I felt genuineness in the atmosphere, I gave freely of my deepest thoughts about truth, about having equal reverence for all religions, about humanity's efforts to arrive at the

L. C. M. and G. C. M. of all religions, and also about prayer and *japa* (the constant repetition of the Lord's name). I hinted at the possibility of occult powers sometimes developing in the course of intense mental training, and the dangers attending this: how the mind is likely to get deflected from its original course, become perverted, lose its balance and so lose sight of its ultimate goal.

Search for Lions

Shri Jashbhai was keen that we should not go without seeing the lions in the National Park. We visited it two days running, and therefore felt quite at home there. The animals also seemed to know us. The giraffes, especially, came up to the edge of the path and posed for photographs! One evening we went to the Park specially in search of lions. On getting authoritative information regarding the whereabouts of those kings of the forest, we went and waited there for hours without getting a glimpse of their Royal Highnesses! Their private secretaries (the *askaris*) explained that they must have made too hearty a meal in the morning and so must have retired to rest: and, if that was so, there was no hope of their coming out at all that evening!

Many other tourists in their cars also wandered about and waited like us in vain! Though we saw many other animals, we could not help feeling disappointed at missing the lions. But our patience and perseverance had their reward at last! Very early the next morning we presented ourselves at the National Park. An *askari* came with us in the car. These *askaris* (forest guards) know all the habits of the animals of the forest, and are able to spot the animals before anyone else can. Our *askari* took us to two

lionesses before we had wandered five to ten miles. It is not easy to make out the brown-skinned lions in the midst of dry grass, but once seen, it is impossible to turn one's eyes away from them. There is nothing extraordinary in the appearance of a lion, especially of a lioness, but their ways and movements proclaim their royal birth.

Disdainful Beasts

We took our car within a few yards of these lionesses, who, after a disdainful glance at us poor bipeds, turned away without wasting a moment's thought upon us! When we tried to get nearer in order to get both of them into one photograph, one of them sent a bored and contemptuous yawn in our direction and turned her back on us, as if to punish us for our presumption. As it was not possible to get nearer, we took a big round and approached them from another side. The lionesses were neither annoyed nor surprised at our efforts to get closer to them. They remained totally indifferent to our presence. One of them walked off and the other stretched herself and prepared to go off to sleep! We left their presence feeling inferior and somewhat humiliated!

I was still smarting at the treatment we had received when our car reached the other end of the Park, about ten miles away. Suddenly, we caught sight of a big lion with a long tawny mane. We saw him just for a few seconds before he disappeared into the bushes, but in those few seconds his picture was clearly imprinted on our minds. It is impossible not to feel a deep respect for the lions when they walk with long dignified steps and with a naturally regal air as much as to say: "*All this is my kingdom.*"

Hair and Age

"This lion seems to be rather old," I observed.

This started a discussion. "How do you know?" asked our companions. Jashbhai disagreed with me. At last the *askari* was referred to in his language and he answered. "It is quite true This lion is quite old. We have been seeing him for the last twenty years. He is not as spry as he was." Everyone again clamoured to be told how I had known that the lion was getting old. I said. "There is an oily sheen on the hair of young animals. As they grow older they start losing that sheen, and their hair begins to look like dried grass. This lion did not have shining hair; also his mane seems to be getting slightly thin, so I concluded that he was old."

That day we returned well satisfied, having had our heart's desire. We were in no mood thereafter to pay any attention to any of the other animals we encountered. Our cup of happiness hummed over when returning from the Park we got a glimpse of the glorious and majestic peak of the Kilimanjaro and this our last sight of that lion among mountains.

New Legation Office

On July 23, Appasahib's office was installed in the new building specially-built for it. The Punjabi contractor, Shri Mangat, has built this at the corner of two important streets of Nairobi, and has rented the whole of the top floor to the Indian Legation, for their offices. I was asked to open this building. People had come from great distances to attend this function. Our people were so happy to have a Commissioner like Shri Appasahib. I gladly took this opportunity of saying a few words about Shri Appasahib, his

secretary Tatya Inamdar, and his information officer, Shri Shahane.

The next day we were entertained to lunch by the American Consul-General, Mr Groth. He seemed to be genuinely interested in *yoga*. The talk ranged from topic to topic, the missionaries serving the Africans, the Communists, Sweden, and other light subjects. As we were vegetarians, Mr Groth had taken special trouble to have a vegetarian lunch prepared for us. In social intercourse the Americans seem to be more friendly than the British.

Hindu-Muslim Question

On July 28, a Punjabi Pakistani gentleman came to see me. He had recently returned from Karachi. He was a teacher once, but is now taking a leading part in politics. He gave me his version of the Hindu-Muslim quarrels in East Africa. His chief complaint was against the Arya Samajis. They started the quarrel. Nothing would stop them, so the Muslims had to start the *Observer*, they went to the other extreme, vying with their opponents in the creation of trouble! He himself stayed aloof, and then broke away from the party of extremists. He described how things went from bad to worse, how he tried to improve matters, but all to no purpose. Finally, he asked the Government to create separate electorates for the Muslims!!

He appealed to me: "You are an associate of Gandhiji, a man of God and man without prejudices and preconceptions. If only you will persuade the Hindus to accept separate electorates enmity would cease, and amity would prevail."

I said: "Real and lasting unity can come about only on the higher level. I believe in all religions, and am not concerned exclusively with the welfare of any

one community. I wish the position of both to improve."

A New Plan

"But," I continued, "I have thought of a very practical plan. Why should we, Hindus and Muslims, fight over an insignificant portion of power offered to us in this country? We are hopelessly insignificant before the might of the British and the numbers of the Africans, and cannot hope to influence the Government through our vote. So, instead of fighting amongst ourselves, why should we not unite and return good Africans as our representatives to the seats reserved to us? By doing this, we shall prove to the Africans that we believe ourselves to be safe in their hands, and are willing to live here on their terms. If we send our own people to the legislatures, we shall be lost like needles in a haystack. We shall surely make ourselves ridiculous in the world if we quarrel even for this. How much better to make the Africans our representatives and thus gain their goodwill! That would be a substantial gain.

"I do not say that we should not enter the legislatures. If the Africans elect any of us as their representative, it would be a matter for pride and happiness. In South Africa the *Kafrs* and the Indians are forced by law to send in Europeans as their representatives in the legislatures. It would indeed set up a new standard if the Africans chose some of us for our services to them and to their country."

Our Pakistani friend could not agree to all this. I doubt if anyone will, in these days. It demands vision and imagination.

Idea of Unity

Talking about India, the same friend asked me :
"You must surely wish that India and Pakistan should become one."

I said . "No. I do not care at all whether Hindustan and Pakistan become one political State or not. What I want is unity of hearts. Not only would I not try for the political unity of Bharat and Pakistan, but I do not even pray for it. What has been given is given. The question, therefore, would enter my mind only if the Muslims of Pakistan themselves wanted to unite with Bharat and brought up a proposal to that effect. Now if any efforts of the sort are made by us, you will say that we are the enemies of Pakistan, and such a suspicion would retard the advent of that heart-unity between us which I long for."

Two African leaders, Peter Koinange and Jomo Kenyata, came to meet us and I had a very frank and heart-to-heart talk with them, chiefly about education and constructive activities. I showed them how the spinning-wheel worked. I told them of the distinction Gandhiji always made between (1) relief work and (2) constructive, nation-building work in the sphere of social service.

"Independent Africans"

Amongst the Africans, there is a group of Christians calling themselves "independent Africans". They are grateful to the white missionaries for all they have done for them, and yet they have two complaints against them. They say to the Europeans :
"We are all Christians, it is true ; but how can we pray

together until you have removed two great injustices done to us ?

“ For one thing, you must help to remove the colour prejudice which your people practise ; and for another, your people have appropriated all our most fertile lands and also our most health-giving highlands. We are not allowed to enter them. You must open these lands for us. We can pray together only if you can make us these amends.”

Why can the whites not understand the bitter pain of these sons of Africa ? How can a civilization built on injustice be beneficial ? Whenever I met Europeans I never failed to submit to them : “ In India people of the so-called higher castes made the same mistakes in older days and have been paying for them through the nose for centuries. Please look into our history and save yourselves from making the same mistakes and reaping the same bitterness and misery.”

XXX

INDIA AND AFRICA

Destiny brought India and Africa together in ancient times. But in modern times it is the Commonwealth that has thrown some of our people and the various African tribes together, and created problems. Our future depends upon our capacity to solve these problems on the basis of inter-racial universal brotherhood.

What are the immediate steps which our people could take to foster goodwill and brotherhood "

Need of Catholicity

The first essential is that our people should overcome the differences amongst themselves and shed separatist tendencies which we have cultivated through sheer apathy. The Muslims are always anxious to assert their separate existence. The Hindus are divided and sub-divided into a variety of castes and communities. They must make up their mind to evolve a common life and a catholicity of tastes in order to mix freely with each other and make common cause for the betterment of all.

Our knowledge of the various African tribes, their languages, customs and manners, is next to nothing. Our people should systematically evolve an adequate secretariat in a central place like Nairobi or Dar-es-Salaam and make a close study of conditions in Africa, and educate our people to adjust themselves to these conditions. Books, magazines and reports of all kinds should be collected and made available to serious students.

We maintain doctors, pleaders, engineers and

contractors and pay them handsomely. Why should we not maintain a number of able sociologists, linguists and economists to serve the community as a whole? It is bound to be a paying proposition in the end.

Helping Africans

The secretariat should be able to serve the Africans also. We could issue small pamphlets in the Swahili language, giving such history of India as will interest the Africans. Some of the best books in Indian literature could also be translated into Swahili. We should not press the Africans to learn our languages but should make adequate provision for the teaching of Hindi and Gujarati for such of the Africans as wish to learn them. The work of translating important books of Hindi and Gujarati into the African languages should be the concern of the Africans themselves. But we can make a beginning and show the way.

As a gesture of goodwill the Government of India are giving a few scholarships to African students to study in India. These are supplemented by some private scholarships given by Indians living in East Africa.

It should be our joy, here in India, to welcome these students, and invite them to stay, during vacations, in some of the best Indian families thus affording them an opportunity to see various aspects of our life. They should also be given an opportunity of studying our institutions, doing constructive and nation-building work.

Basic Education

There are many families, both of Hindus and Muslims, in Gujarat, Saurashtra and Cutch who have contacts in East Africa. A number of Sikhs from

Punjab have also settled there. Some Roman Catholics from Goa are also making a decent living there. All these could combine in establishing the friendliest relations with our African neighbours. Differences in eating habits and outlook on life have to be overcome and even appreciated. This in itself is a great education.

The system of basic education which we are evolving in India bids fair to be a saviour of the backward people, backward in the different arts of life and in the cultivation of social virtues. African leaders and educationists should be invited to investigate the possibility of introducing basic education in African national schools. Shri Peter Komange, the leader of the Kikuyus, is doing excellent work among his own people by running independent schools. Our people should make a close study of African primitive handicrafts as also of their music and dancing, and see whether African music could not be incorporated in Indian music. It is a rich field which nobody has yet thought of tapping and developing.

This is a summary of the various discussions I had with some of the earnest Indians in Nairobi. I insisted that hereafter we should not start or maintain Indian Associations as before. They should be Asian Associations where not only Indians—Hindus, Muslims and Goans—could come together but which Arabs and Chinese also, if any, could join.

On July 23, Dr. Karmen, the well-known anaesthetist, came to see me. He is a fine person and a very sincere Christian, believing implicitly in the Bible and the second coming of Christ. He believes with all his heart that Christ will come again one day,

become the king of the world, and establish peace everywhere. He was not prepared to set this theory aside even for a moment, even for the sake of argument. We had a very pleasant chat for nearly three hours, about Pacifism, Communism, the sufferings and difficulties of the poor, and the mission of the British in Africa. I was glad I could meet such an earnest soul like Dr. Karmen.

Lunching at a Maharashtrian house the same day, the subject of languages arose. I was asked why I laid more stress on the learning of Gujarati than on Hindi. I explained once again that I knew and recognized the importance of Hindi, having worked for the spread of Hindi for years. But 80 per cent of the Indians in East Africa spoke Gujarati. So it was only through this language that the social life of the different Indian communities could be developed into a harmonious whole. Hindi also should be learnt.

I was taken to see the Alliance High School, run for the Africans by several combined missions. It gets a grant from Government. A sum of £ 60 is spent per year for every student. The students, besides learning European music, were taught music composed from snatches of pure African music blended skilfully together. This is really very beautiful and grand and capable of expressing African sentiments with great effect. This beautiful synthesis of two cultures reminded me of our Hindustani music which is a sweet blend of Aryan and Persian music. Similarly, in architecture the palace of Tirumal-Naik in Madura in India in which Hindu, Islamic and Christian architectures are blended together to make a thing of perfect beauty. Such results can only be

achieved when one culture can influence another without destroying its genius, individuality and self-respect. I expressed my appreciation warmly, and begged them to go on making new experiments in this direction.

Unique Institution

The next day I saw the Jean School. It is connected with the Government Institute at Kabete. The principal of the school, Mr Asquith, is very well-disposed towards the Africans, and has made a deep study of African life. In very few institutions have I seen such good organization and so many facilities. This institution keeps its own bus in which the students are taken to visit all sorts of institutions in order to study various activities. The uniqueness of this school lies in the fact that the African chiefs also are allowed to stay here with their wives and families. As the family gets trained as a whole, the change in their lives comes to stay.

It was a real pleasure to talk to Mr Asquith, who is a great scholar and sociologist. There was an interesting discussion about the development of the African languages and the advisability of replacing English by Swahili as a medium of instruction.

Indian Schools

After seeing the schools run by the Europeans, I could not help wondering why we Indians could not make similar arrangements for our children.

The Arya Samajis and the Agakhanis are keen on education. They spend money on it freely, and in some places the Agakhanis achieve a certain discipline

and efficiency by employing European teachers and organizers. Yet it must be confessed that as a rule the views of the Indians who hold the purse-strings are so narrow, and their interference so great that any real progress becomes practically impossible. Whenever the teachers spoke freely, I was able to gauge the situation correctly. I could not help feeling that we ourselves are the enemies of our own children's education.

I wanted to have a long and leisurely talk with Shri Shivabhai Amin about education and many other topics. He had been the first person to draw my attention to East Africa. In the early days he had written a great deal in the newspapers on behalf of the Indians, and had advised them on many important matters. We promised to dine with him on July 27 hoping for this long talk, which we had both been looking forward to; but being Hindus by temperament we had to spend the whole time talking to his guest, a European lady who was convalescing at Shivabhai's house. As she was a keen educationist and psychologist, we had a most interesting conversation, but the exchange of ideas between Shivabhai and myself never materialized.

XXXI

AMONG AFRICAN FRIENDS

I was afraid that I would miss seeing Nakuru in the Rift Valley, just as I had missed Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria. But as our plane was leaving on August 1 we were able to start for Nakuru on July 29. Making a descent of about 2,500 ft. from Nairobi, we reached the Rift Valley. After this the road is flat and straight. To go along this beautiful road in this broad valley was a joy in itself. On the hills on either side of us there were craters of extinct volcanoes. Our eyes had now become expert at recognizing craters.

Three Lakes

We passed three lakes in succession, Naivasha, Gilgil and Nakuru. A lake is a thing of joy for man, beast and bird. These lakes being on flat ground are quick alike to dry up or to flood the country around. When they dry up, their beds are a great attraction to students of geology. Naivasha is also interesting for another reason. The seaplanes between Africa and Europe take off from this lake. It is great fun to watch a seaplane taking off, like a swan or a gull. As the seaplanes fly up, streams of water flow from them as from the body of a newly-bathed bird. But when they 'land' on the lake they so churn up the water and create such a commotion that the poor fishes in the lake must get thoroughly frightened, thinking that the end of their world had come !

At Nakuru there was a public meeting at the Sikh gurdwara. There were some Goan friends present, so

I was asked to speak in English. I spoke first in Hindi and then in English. Here, as everywhere else there are two parties among our people, the only difference being that they had here quite modern names for the two parties, *Capitalist and Labour*. I do not think that the Capitalist Party is wholly composed of millionaires, and I should be really happy to know that some, at least, of the Labour Party are used to labouring with their own hands !

It was 9 p.m. before we returned to Nairobi.

Fourteen Falls

Though we had spent so many days with Shri Inamdar and his family, we had not yet been able to spend a quiet day with them. So taking a complete holiday from public duty we set out on Sunday with the Inamdar family for a picnic at the Fourteen Falls. We sailed forth in the morning. Suryakant and his wife Bharati also joined us. It was a pleasant drive of 42 miles. The Falls are about 14 miles from the town of Thika. In fact, one of the Thika rivers comes here and takes a leap from a wide halfmoon of rocks in 14 different falls into the rocky basin below, sounding merry invitations to all around to come and be one with the beauty of the place. We enjoyed ourselves in this lovely spot, clambering over the rocks, dangling our feet in the cool water and taking snapshots. We talked at random, ate heartily and merrily, and returned at last only because we could not stay there for ever.

African Dances

In the whole of my East African trip, there was nothing I liked more than the visit we paid to the home of Koinange, where we met his father and the



At Githunguri between Jomo Kenyatta and Peter Koinange

other members of his family ; and the visit to Githunguri and another place where Peter was running independent schools for the Africans. The visit to Githunguri was not just a visit to one school. It was a true glimpse of the life of the Africans as a whole, as well as a glimpse of their past, present and future. Peter Komange, his father, and Peter's friend and co-worker, Jomo Kenyata, who also is a leader of the Kikuyus, as well as hundreds of other Africans, young and old had gathered together at Githunguri, including contingents of students from many schools.

We saw many African dances. The dancers were in their ancient tribal costumes, and had adorned their faces with vari-coloured spots of bright paint. Tying tins full of pebbles to their knees they danced to their music. As they danced with greater and greater fervour, the rattles at their knees made quite an intoxicating sound. Shri Inamdar's daughters, Usha and Lata, joined the African women in their dance, which delighted everyone.

A Dancer at Ninety

A final dance was specially reserved for old women. According to the rules, only women over 60 could take part in it. All the ladies were dressed in their colourful costumes, and each wore coloured beads and feathers. They had shaven their heads and rubbed the scalps with oil till they shone. Their necklaces hung on their backs instead of on their chests. Skins hung from their waists in front and behind. This was a prayer dance. According to the rules of the old ladies' dance, the big toes of the feet were never to leave the ground no matter how vigorously they danced. One old lady was over 90 years old, and yet she was amongst the most

enthusiastic of the dancers. One of their rules is very amusing. If a girl marries an old man, she has a right to join this dance even if she is under-age herself !

Symbolic Trees

After these dances were over, there was a religious ceremony of planting two trees. Two big maps, one of India and the other of Africa, were outlined in an open field with little stones. Two ceremonial trees were to be planted, one in each of these maps, by the two guests from India ! I was greatly touched by this idea. I planted the tree in 'Africa' and Kamalnayan in 'India'. The African leaders told us : "These two trees are the symbols of the friendship and peace which exist and will continue to grow between our two countries. We shall look after these two trees with especial love and care, as they are being planted by two close associates of Mahatma Gandhi."

The speech I made after this ceremony was translated word for word by Jomo Kenyata. He is an orator, and exercises great influence upon his tribesmen. He simplified our sentences so that the people could understand everything. The old ladies who were listening with interest would break out into peals of approval when some sentiment made special appeal to them. Their way of expressing their pleasure is to strike their cheeks with both their hands, making a peculiar noise the while, something like 'Ulu-lu-lu-lu-lu.' This is also done in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This applause rose to its highest pitch and continued for a couple of minutes when I asked the old ladies present to give their blessings, so that there may be a lasting heart-unity between Africa and India. This was a truly memorable occasion in my life.



The Author planting the ceremonial tree of Indo-African
amity. Shri Jomo Kenyata and Senior Chief
Koinange are also seen in the picture

It was at this place at the end of his speech, that Kamalnayan started the new slogan of *Jay Africa*, which was taken up enthusiastically by all the men, women and children there.

XXXII

SELF-HELP IN EDUCATION

We were so impressed by all that we saw in Githunguri that I requested Peter to show me one of his schools at work. Accordingly, we set out on July 27 with Peter and went to a school where 1,030 students, both boys and girls, study together. We visited various classes and saw the work of the students. All of them wrote a good hand. When they gathered together to hear me speak, I asked the girls who were behind to come and sit in front, which naturally gratified them highly.

The rapidity with which the gulf between two epochs had been bridged by these friends was strikingly apparent when the same young people who had been giving us a dance dressed in full traditional costume a few minutes ago came and sat in front of me dressed in shorts, and answered my questions in English. Introducing the carpentry teacher, Peter told us: "This gentleman is carpenter and mason as well as our priest."

This industrious priest reminded me of St. Paul,

Gift of Charkha

Speaking here I said: "Man's chief requirements are food, clothing and shelter. You are completely self-reliant in the matter of food and shelter. You were

self-reliant, and therefore civilized, in the matter of clothes also, as long as you went about clad in barks of trees and leather tanned by yourselves. It is a great pity that nowadays, you are dependent on others for your clothes in spite of growing some of the best cotton in the world. The day you take to spinning on the *charlha* and weaving your own cloth on handlooms, you will become completely self-reliant. When this happens, our country will lose a good customer no doubt, but it is always better to have a self-reliant neighbour as a friend than to make money out of a week one."

I then presented my spinning-wheel to them. Peter explained at length the importance of the spinning-wheel to the students and the teachers.

Story of a Pea-pod

Peter is running several schools like the two we saw, without any help from the Government. His method of work is interesting as will be seen from the incident I narrate below.

Peter was collecting funds for his schools at a certain place. An old village woman who had nothing to give came forward and offered a pea-pod. Understanding and warmly appreciating the deep feeling behind this gift, Peter accepted it and put it up for auction there and then!

Someone bought it for a good price. But Peter made out a receipt for the sum not in the name of the buyer, but in that of the old lady! He also told her publicly: "You now have the right to examine the accounts of the institution whenever you wish to."

After that we went to the house of Jomo Kenyatta. There is a lot of land surrounding his house. On the floor of his house were beautiful skins. He presented

us with one of them. We were shown two trees planted where the Africans had once through sheer desperation killed two Europeans and some policemen.

Friendship with Africans, visits to their homes, and the talk I had with the African youth at Shri Mathu's place, as also the visit to Chief Petro's on the Kilimanjaro, are the happiest and most important events of my East African trip

Last Days in Nairobi

I have purposely left out several very pleasant experiences of the last ten days in Nairobi. As, for example, the completely teetotal dinner given by Shri Jal; the discussions at the Friends' Circle; the Kashmiri vegetarian dishes we tasted at the dinner given by Shri and Shrimati Kaul; the talks with Shri Narsibhai of Arusha, and many such events.

The fast-approaching day of our departure began to press on our hearts like a day of doom. At times I would sit looking at Yamutai's Gandhi Album, at others I would be "snapped" with our host and his family, including their Kisuku (Congo parrot). Sometimes I would talk to Suryakantbhai and his doctor brother, and then again I would see the social work being done by Shri Behramji. I also bought some warm clothes against the threatened bitter cold of Addis Ababa. And so the days melted away, and the inevitable day of departure dawned. We could not help a feeling of sadness.

The Parting

We had no idea that so many friends would be at the aerodrome to see us off. In addition to the Nairobi friends, some friends from Kampala had also come

unexpectedly. Every traveller has to face partings. Usually the pain is forgotten in the anticipation of new and interesting sights and the excitement of seeing new people and making new friends. But this time it wasn't like that.

Nearly three months ago, many people had gathered at the Nairobi station to greet us as 'guests from India.' Today many more had gathered out of love to see us off. Most of the time was spent in taking photographs. Many friends gave us flowers and photographs. But Dr. Adalja and his wife gave us a very valuable and beautifully illustrated book, *The Kikuyu*. This book, written by Catholic missionaries, gives a great deal of very useful information. Shri Peter Koinange and Shri Jomo Kenyata belong to this Kikuyu tribe. What we had seen at the homes of these friends and in schools and museums was supplemented by this book. There could not have been a more welcome gift.

We said farewell to East Africa with a heavy heart.

XXXIII

THE LAND OF THE "LION OF JUDAH"

For a long time the whole continent of Africa has been under the direct or indirect control of the Europeans. The only notable exception is Ethiopia or Abyssinia. This may be because the ruler is a Christian or because it was not easy to bring either an army or to start trading here, the country being so mountainous and difficult of access.

Whatever the reason, this kingdom has remained independent. The Italians did once invade and capture it in 1935. The Emperor had to flee from the country and take refuge in England. At the beginning of the second world war, England defeated Italy and returned the kingdom of Ethiopia to the Emperor, appointing, according to their usual custom, a British adviser there.

Foreign Advisers

The Emperor allowed this arrangement to go on for the three stipulated years after which he appointed advisers from different countries of Europe, and from America, and put them in charge of the various departments of administration. In this way he benefits by the advice and practical efficiency of the West without allowing any one Power to have too much influence.

The Emperor, Haile Sailasse, attaches so much importance to education that he has kept this portfolio in his own hands, although he accepts advice and help from foreigners. There are a number of Indian teachers in Ethiopia.

In Addis Ababa itself there is one high school, run at the expense of the Emperor. In two other towns

there are a couple of small high schools. Education is given through the local language, Amheric and English.

Ethiopia being the only free country in the whole of Africa except of course Egypt, I had felt somehow that it must be the direct or indirect leader and inspirer of the will to independence which some Africans were beginning to develop. But when we actually reached Ethiopia, I saw that I was mistaken. The Ethiopians were too engrossed in their own problems to take any active interest in wider issues or in Africa south of the Sahara.

The population is less than 22 to a square mile, and yet the Government does not like outsiders to come and settle there. Seeing the way the Europeans have forced themselves into every country in the world, it is not surprising that people should be on their guard.

Before Italy conquered Ethiopia, there were about 4,000 Indians in this country. The Italians drove them all away. Today they number not more than 500, and of these 300 or 350 live in Addis Ababa itself. Most of them are from Gujarat and Kathiawad, both Hindus and Muslims. Out of about 70 teachers, a few are Maharashtrians and the rest are Christian Indians from Goa and Cochin. Nearly 60 or 70 per cent of the trade is in the hands of the Indians, whereas the industries are in the hands of Europeans.

Scope for Work

The Government of Ethiopia is keen that Indians should help to develop the agriculture, trade and industries of the land. There is a great scope there for cloth mills, sugar mills, the manufacture of cement and of matches, tanning of leather, and many other

industries There is money to be made also, from the cultivation of maize and coffee, from bee-keeping and fruit-growing. But I suspect our people are rather shy of sinking their money here.

Such is the country for which we started from Nairobi. We were to go from Nairobi to Addis Ababa ; thence, via Dirediva, Jibuti, Aden and Karachi to Bombay. The ticket for the whole air journey cost 1,900 shillings.

Our plane took off exactly at 8 a.m. We had to go 712 miles. For the first few miles we travelled in a thick mist which enveloped us completely. This becomes boring after the first novelty has worn off, so that we were quite relieved when we left it behind or below us. For a time we flew along the edges of the clouds, on the right were the clouds and on the left the fertile lands of Kenya.

Mount Kenya

After a while we were delighted to get a clear view of the grand peak of Mount Kenya, which stood out all the clearer for having a mass of clouds as its background Mount Kenya is about 17,000 feet high. As long as it was visible, we had eyes for nothing else. Surrounded by lesser peaks, the peak of Mount Kenya stands high above its fellows like a saint in the midst of ordinary mortals. It is one of the oldest mountains in the world. There used to be a crater on its peak. It has worn off through centuries of erosion, and yet, even today it is not less than 17,000 feet high ! It seems quite right and proper that the whole country around should be called by its name. The Europeans have settled all around it

When flying in an aeroplane the scenes change quietly but quickly. Even Mount Kenya disappeared

from our view within a short time and for a while all was flat and uninteresting. This induced slumber which we badly needed.

On being refreshed I looked to the right and saw five or six lakes. Looking them up in the map, I found that they were Lakes Chamo, Abaya, Ousa, Shala, Langana and Zwai. Behind the lakes could be seen the range of the Mendeb mountains. The lakes made Ethiopia more attractive for us. So engrossed were we in looking up the names of the lakes in the map that we did not realize we were nearing Addis Ababa. When our plane suddenly began to climb we knew we were approaching Addis Ababa, which is among the highest towns in the world, being about 9,000 feet above sea-level. Addis Ababa is really a fragrant new flower blooming on Mount Entoto.

The words "Addis Ababa" mean "The New Flower," and it is fragrant because the town is full of tall and stately eucalyptus trees.

We landed at the Addis Ababa aerodrome at 12-30 to the minute. Our Ambassador, Sardar Sant Singh, and his wife were there with other Indians to receive us.

I had much to talk over with our gracious host, not only about Ethiopia but also about our own recent fight for freedom. He was a member of the Central Legislature for eight years, and gave the Government a difficult time as an Opposition member. I used to read in the papers his arguments with the officials, and admired his quick wit. It was interesting to recall those days.

Before being appointed Ambassador, Sardar Sant Singh was sent here as leader of a goodwill mission by the Government of India in 1948.

Our programme consisted of eating, talking and visiting places of interest. That evening there was a meeting in the municipal hall, arranged by the Indian Association. The hall was decked with Ethiopian flags, very similar in colour and design to our own tri-colour. Sardar Sant Singh presided over the meeting. I spoke in Gujarati, as most of the men and women, both Hindus and Muslims, present were Gujaratis. Our chairman could not understand much of Gujarati, but he enjoyed the Hindi speech which Kamalnayan made after me.

Ratilal Sheth

It gave me great pleasure to find on reaching Addis Ababa that Ratilal Sheth whose name I had been hearing as an energetic and tactful leader of the Indian community was none other than an old acquaintance of mine. When I went to Karachi some years ago, this young man joined us on a trip to Manora with other friends and old students of mine. We could therefore talk to each other without any reserve. I was able to obtain some authentic information from him on the conditions prevailing here.

Another pleasant surprise was that Sardar Sant Singh's secretary turned out to be an old friend and schoolmate of Saroj's! So we both had the rare joy of renewing old memories while enjoying and garnering new experiences.

Having had no time to read up anything about Ethiopia beforehand, I borrowed a couple of books from our host and, having no other time, woke up at 3 a.m. to glance through them. After our morning prayers we set out to see the Gujarati school. As the headmaster was ill in bed, his wife showed us round the school. I have always felt that it is not enough to

keep good teachers in schools. The home atmosphere of the children also must be improved. There should be an extra teacher in every school whose sole work should consist of meeting the parents and helping them to improve the atmosphere of their homes ; and this without making them spend more money.

We went for a long drive in the beautiful countryside on the road to Addis Alam, the old capital. The shape of the big mountain on the left was especially attractive. The Indian National Flag on the car of our host looked very much like the Ethiopian flag from a distance, so the unsophisticated passers-by bowed reverently as the car passed them. One could see that behind those bows was a very real respect and love for the flag and the rulers of their country ; it wasn't just fear of the Government that bent their heads.

Old Churches

In the afternoon there was a lunch at Ras Hotel given by Sardar Sant Singh to which the chief Ministers of the Ethiopian Government were invited. We were not able to meet Emperor Haile Sailasse, as he was out of Addis Ababa, but his private secretary, as well as the Ministers for Finance, Trade and Industry were there. They asked many questions about India and Swaraj. The Ministers were accompanied by their charming wives. One of them, Shrimati Elizabeth, was especially friendly, and courteously offered to show us the famous old Christian churches of Addis Ababa. We saw one of the temples from without, and one from within. The arrangements for preaching and worship were so unusual and convenient that I wondered whether it would not be possible to adopt them in our country.

On the top of a high hill near Addis Ababa there is an ancient Christian temple with a monastery nearby. The mural paintings of Christ and his disciples, and of various saints, were very similar to the Hindu religious paintings. Even their ways of worship and the various feast and fast days are very much like ours. This made me all the keener to know the history of the Coptic Church in this country.

The modern Christian civilization is dependent for the greater part on science and widespread organization. It has more of the philosophy of the Greeks and the Imperialism of the Romans than pure Christianity for its foundation. The outlook and philosophy of original Christianity is essentially Asian.

A monk from the monastery came up. His ways, dress, beard, and general appearance were exactly like those of an ordinary Indian village *sadhu*. The people around obviously had a great reverence for this monk, but he seemed utterly indifferent to it !

We enjoyed this trip to the temple on the hill, as also the adventures we had with our cars, which seemed to be more tired than we were. We returned home in pouring rain, and I, at least, was ready for an early dinner and bed to follow. Kamalnayan, however, showed some films about wild animals — a recent acquisition — to our Indian friends.

While we were in Addis Ababa, we had a warm invitation from the Indians in Dirediva to spend a day with them. As this was quite impossible, we promised to give ourselves the pleasure of meeting them at the aerodrome for the few minutes allowed to us.

XXXIV

IN THE LAND OF THE PROPHET

On August 3 we left Addis Ababa. But the town apparently had no intention of letting us off so easily ! We made an early start. Sardar Sant Singh was not well, and we begged of him not to come to the aerodrome, but he simply would not listen. We met our friends at the aerodrome. Shri Ratilal Sheth gave me a walking-stick as a memento of this visit, a slim, simple affair made of eucalyptus wood, with an ivory handle.

Our plane was a cargo plane, not one of the luxurious passenger planes. On one side was a great heap of cargo secured with huge ropes, and on the other were we passengers, about 14 in all, trying hard to achieve some comfort on hard, long metal benches.

Engine Trouble

We took off, and our hosts went home. We landed after a flight of about 25 minutes. For some time I had been rather surprised at a change in the direction of the foggy sunlight, but I could not be very sure. We could not have reached Dirediva so early. I wondered whether we were halting at a small station on the way. We got out of the plane and, to our utter amazement, found ourselves once more in Addis Ababa ! Were we awake or dreaming ? What could have happened ?

The pilot informed us that after going about fifty miles he had found that the engine was making a strange noise. Not being sure of reaching Dirediva safely, they had circled round and flown back the

fifty miles to Addis Ababa. We were advised to have our breakfast while another plane was being got ready for us. So we all repaired to the restaurant and helped ourselves to some light refreshments.

The plane was soon ready. All the cargo had been duly trussed up on one side. We got in. The plane started taxiing. It went along the ground faster and faster, and for as long as it was asked to—but it simply refused to leave the ground! After several trials the pilot gave up. He said: "We have only one more plane left now. We shall try for the last time." This was tested and brought out. All the heavy cargo and ourselves were duly transferred. At exactly 9-30 this aeroplane started off without any trouble at all, and reached Dirediva in an hour and a half.

At Dirediva

The people there had decorated one of the halls of the aerodrome with beautiful carpets, flags and flowers. The town is quite a distance from the aerodrome. They had brought all these things from the town and had waited hours for our plane to arrive. Almost all the Indians of the town had gathered there. How inconvenient it is that man should have just the one organ both for eating and speaking! Our friends were very eager to hear us, and equally keen that we should do justice to the feast they had so lovingly prepared. It was lucky that there were two chief guests, so we could make a fair division of labour. Kamalnayan ate, and I talked! It was one of the warmest receptions we had had.

An hour's flight from Dirediva took us to Jibuti. As soon as the plane landed, we were driven a furlong or so in a car to where our people had collected. They told us that the Muslims there held themselves aloof

and had the Pakistani mentality. I spoke for ten minutes in Gujarati and gave them my idea of what our attitude should be. I saw that Gujaratis everywhere seem to understand Gandhiji's point of view more easily than others, and try their best to act up to it.

After leaving Jibuti, we were very excited. Flying over the Gulf of Aden we came to a point from which we could see the continent of Africa on one side and the continent of Asia on the other, separated by green waters decorated with tiny islands! How could I ever have seen such a grand sight had aeroplanes never been invented! I prayed with a full heart that having been raised to this height from which I could see both the continents simultaneously I should be granted the will and the strength to serve both of them with loyalty and devotion.

We flew on, admiring the beauty of the sea. Bidding farewell to Africa, where we had been so happy for nearly three months, we literally entered the atmosphere of Asia.

Port of Aden

The first thought that came to me just before we touched Aden was that we were lucky indeed to be going to the land where the Prophet Mohammed spread the religion of peace — Islam.

Then I wondered whether the land of Aden had always been a part of Arabia, or was it that the oceans on both sides, indulged in a game of sand-throwing and created this sandy link between the mainland and Aden. Seeing the craters of Aden, one feels sure that it must have been a part of Africa at one time. Perhaps one of the ends of the two rifts which were formed in



Farewell

Africa in prehistoric times may have extended to the Red Sea and the Jordan river.

Another thought that came to me was that Aden had at one time formed politically a part of our Bombay Presidency. In those days I could have felt that I was stepping on my own country. Swami Vivekananda, returning from his tour of Europe and America, went and sat in a *panwala's* (betelnut vendor's) shop the minute he reached Aden in order just to have the joy of speaking in Hindustani. Talking away in Hindustani and chewing *pan*, he told his European disciples that it was a deep joy for him to be able to speak to one of his own people in his own language after so many days.

The Hosts

The President of the Indian Association, Shri Dinshah Adenwala, is an old inhabitant of this place. When Saroj visited Europe with her father about 18 years ago, he and his hospitable father entertained them. So he practically took charge of Saroj.

The Arabian Sea, which begins here, seemed eager to exhibit all its colours here, and at once. On the sea-shore are the houses of the rich and the influential. This is the new town. The old town is situated within the huge crater, in crowded little houses. That whole part is called "The Crater". We were to stay in the best hotel on the sea-shore, the Crescent. It was a pity that with so many hospitable people around we should have had to stay in a hotel just out of regard for prestige; but as our Commissioner, Shri Thadani, was staying at this hotel, and we were in his charge, the other Indians had to fall in with his suggestion.

We were spending just 26 hours in Aden. By the time we had had our baths, it was time to attend a select party given by Shri Thadani, where Indians, Hindu, Muslim, Parsi and Christian leaders, were present with a good sprinkling of Arab friends.

Public Meeting

In a corner of the crater is a temple dedicated to the goddess Inglaḡ. In front of this temple they had arranged a public meeting. I was amazed to see the number of people that had collected here. Most of them were Gujaratis. There were also a few Arabs. I spoke in Gujarati and English, and left Kamalnayan to speak in Hindi.

I said : " This visit to Aden has been unexpected. I feel blessed to be in the land of the Prophet. The distrust between the various countries of the world grows apace. People even go so far as to cultivate it deliberately. The attitude of India is quite different. When our fight for independence was at its height, we chose a learned Muslim divine from Arabia to be the President of our National Congress. He is now the Minister of Education in the Central Cabinet of our vast country. We wish that our friendship with Arabia should grow from strength to strength. Mahatmaji's message to the Indians here is that they should merge with the people of this country as sugar dissolves in milk."

After the meeting we dined at Shri Sabnis's house. It was a very pleasant, typically Maharashtrian dinner, and our friendly, homely chat on various subjects was equally delightful. On one wall of his drawing room I perceived a map of the Arabian Sea. On one side was the horn of Africa, on the other India. At the top was the vast expanse of Arabia, and the

middle of the map was taken up by our Western Sea. This beautiful map tempted me and now it hangs in my room, reminding me of the happy hours I spent in Aden.

Town in the Crater

The next morning we breakfasted at Shri Joshi's place. His house is charmingly situated, almost overhanging the sea. After breakfast we took a long drive around Aden. As I said, the main part of the old town is situated in the crater. This is the lower crater, with a rocky wall surrounding it. Above this rocky wall is another crater. There are three means of egress from the lower crater, a valley and two tunnels. On one side of the mountain are two big tanks built by the kings of old. In this country the only way to keep alive is to store plenty of water. About ten miles or so from here is a place called Sheikh Usman, where the present Government has sunk tube-wells. We visited it. There is a tiny garden here which in this bare country shines out like a good deed in a naughty world!

Houses in Ruin

While driving through the crater we saw that some of the houses had been burnt and despoiled. On enquiry I learnt that these were the relics of a fairly recent outrage perpetrated by the Arabs who in a fit of fury had driven the Jews away and burned their houses. Now there are hardly any Jews left in Aden, and the handful that remain go about in fear.

It was a painful sight, but a traveller should see and mentally note all things but say little!

The afternoon lunch was arranged by some Indian friends in the hall of the Agiari (the Parsi Fire-

temple). It was amazing how much we could see and experience within the short span of 24 hours. We were able to contact almost all the facets of the social life of Aden.

As we were leaving for India, we got a message at the aerodrome from the local Arabs: "Most of us did not know of your public meeting yesterday. We have heard the gist of your speech from the few Arabs who were present. We appreciate it. We should very much like to arrange a lecture for you. Please stay a day longer if it is at all possible."

To stay was impossible. But it was touching to receive such an invitation at a time when some unemployed Arabs were complaining to the British officers that the traders of India were robbing them, and they needed protection. Had it been at all possible, I should surely have stayed and got to know the Arabs a little better. All I could say was: "I am thinking of going to Egypt one of these days. When I do go, I shall make it a point to stop a day in Aden and gladly meet all of you."

Flight over Desert

At 4 p.m. we left Aden. Our plane flew over the whole of Southern Arabia until nightfall. There were completely barren hills below. No vegetation, no trees, not even mud. Nothing but rock and sand for miles and miles. At rare intervals, some valley would show a gleaming thread of water. Some huts and a little verdure would make a delightful pattern near the flowing stream.

We were going from west to east, so we had to put our watches two and a half hours forward at once before going to sleep.

Owing to the kindness of the Tata agent in Nairobi, special arrangement had been made to enable me to stretch myself and get some sleep. It was a unique experience for me thus to sleep comfortably thousands of feet above earth and water. I don't think, even the angels, as they descend to the earth, could be sleeping like this in mid-air.

XXXV

HOME COMING

At the unearthly hour of 1-30 in the morning we reached Karachi, paused a brief hour, and started again, reaching Bombay on August 5 at 5-20 a.m. We had been away for three months less three days, but we had experienced and seen so much that it seemed as if we had been away for years.

It was good to be back in Bombay after a long absence. I had to give 75 per cent duty on the two or three ivory articles of African workmanship costing about a hundred rupees which I had brought with me. I did not mind this at all, as the money goes into the treasury of our Swaraj Government.

This was the first time I had been abroad. I had gone all over East Africa as an independent citizen of an independent country. I had enjoyed the hospitality of the Indians there, and exchanged ideas with the British rulers. And most especially gratifying was the fact that I had been able to win the trust and friendship of the leaders and self-dedicated servants of Africa.

The contacts in a continent where three civilizations meet, one representing the ancient culture of the East, another, the modern and dominant culture of the West, and the third showing a primitive culture just trying to shed its inertia of ages under the stress of modern conditions was a unique experience and was nothing short of a dedication.